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John Milton

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more
bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide—
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: “God doth not need
Either man’s work, or His own gifts: who best 10
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His
state
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;—
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Thomas Gray

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.



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Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring
heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built
shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy
stroke!



Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted
vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; 50
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.



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Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered
Muse,

The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.



For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
' Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dew away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn; 100

' There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

' Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

' One morn I missed him on the 'customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree; 110
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;



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' The next with dirges due in sad array
 Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him
borne,
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
 A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;
 Fair science frowned not on his humble birth
 And melancholy marked him for her own. 120
 Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
 Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
 He gave to misery (all he had), a tear,
 He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wished)
a friend.
 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

William Wordsworth

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.



Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free; 11
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

" THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US "

The World is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be 10
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.



THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands 10
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago: 20
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?



Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,—
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill; 10
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.



S. T. Coleridge

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; how the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a sea-bird, and how he was followed by many strange judgments, and in what manner he came back to his own country.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

*An ancient Mariner
meeteth three Gallants
bidden to a wedding
feast, and detaineth
one.*

'The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

10

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

*The Wedding-Guest
is spell-bound by the
eye of the old seafaring
man, and constrained
to hear his tale.*



The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
 He cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

20

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared;
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
 *Out of the sea came he!
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells
 how the ship sailed
 southward with a good
 wind and fair weather
 till it reached the Line.

Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon—'
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

30

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry minstrelzy.

The Wedding-Guest
 heareth the bridal
 music, but the Mariner
 continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

'And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong:
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

The ship driven by
 a storm toward the
 South Pole.



With sloping masts and dipping prow,
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold:
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
 Did send a dismal sheen:
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
 The ice was all between.

The land of ice, and
 of fearful sounds,
 where no living thing
 was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around: 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and
 howled,

Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
 Through the fog it came;
 As if it had been a Christian soul,
 We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-bird,
 called the Albatross,
 came through the
 snow-fog, and was
 received with great joy
 and hospitality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
 The helmsman steered us through! 70

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the Albatross
 proveth a bird of good
 omen, and followeth
 the ship as it returned
 northward through fog
 and floating ice.



In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.'

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— 80
Why look'st thou so?'—'With my cross-
bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.'

The ancient Mariner
inhospitably killeth the
pious bird of good
omen.

PART II

'The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

' And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

' And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to sla
That made the breeze to blow!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

'Nor dim nor red, like God's own head.
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.



' The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

' Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt
down,

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

110

' All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

' Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

' Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

120

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

' The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

' About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

130



' And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

' And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

' Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels: concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

140

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea bird round his neck.

PART III

' There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

' At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

150

' A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.



' With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,

We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, a sail! a sail!

160

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship: and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

' With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,

Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy; they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy

' See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

170

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

' The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

' And straight the Sun was flecked with
bars,

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

180

' Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?



' Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew?
 Is that a Death? and are there two?
 Is Death that woman's mate?

And its ribs are seen
 as bars on the face of
 the setting Sun. The
 Spectre-Woman and
 her Death-mate, and
 no other on board the
 skeleton ship. Like
 vessel, like crew!

' Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
 Her locks were yellow as gold:
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

' The naked hulk alongside came.
 And the twain were casting dice;
 "The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
 Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-in-
 Death have dined for
 the ship's crew, and
 she (the latter) winneth
 the ancient Mariner.

' The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
 At one stride comes the dark;
 With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
 Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

No twilight within
 the courts of the Sun.
 At the rising of the
 Moon.

' We listened and looked sideways up!
 Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
 My life-blood seemed to sip!
 The stars were dim, and thick the night,
 The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
 white;

' From the sails the dew did drip—
 Till clomb above the eastern bar
 The horned Moon, with one bright star 210
 Within the nether tip.



One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

One after another,

' Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

His shipmates drop
down dead.

' The souls did from their bodies fly,— 220
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!'

But Life-in-Death
begins her work on
the ancient Mariner.

PART IV

' I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The Wedding-Guest
feareth that a Spirit
is talking to him.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'—
' Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! 230
This body dropt not down.

But the ancient
Mariner assureth him
of his bodily life, and
proceedeth to relate
his horrible penance.

' Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

' The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

He despiseth the
creatures of the calm,



' I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay,

240 And envieth that they
should live, and so
many lie dead.

' I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

' I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and
the sky, 250

Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

' The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse liveth
for him in the eye of
the dead men.

' An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye! 260
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

' The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside---

In his loneliness and
fixedness he yearneth
towards the journeying
Moon, and the stars
that still sojourn, yet
still move onward; and
everywhere the blue



' Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
'The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

270 sky belongs to them,
and is their appointed
rest and their native
country and their own
natural homes, which
they enter unannoun-
ced, as lords that are
certainly expected, and
yet there is a silent
joy at their arrival.

' Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes;
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

By the light of the
Moon he beholdeth
God's creatures of the
great calm.

' Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire;
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and
their happiness.

' Oh happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

He blesseth them in
his heart.

' The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
Like lead into the sea.

The spell begins to
break.

PART V

' Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

BEU 1954



' The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

300

By grace of the Holy
Mother, the ancient
Mariner is refreshed
with rain.

' My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

' I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

' And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

310

He heareth sounds
and seeth strange sights
and commotions in the
sky and the element.

' The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

' And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud; 320

The Moon was at its edge.

' The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

222154



' The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan.

330

The bodies of the
 ship's crew are ins-
 pired, and the ship
 moves on :

' They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

' The helmsman steered, the ship moved
 on;

Yet never a breeze up-blew;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
 We were a ghastly crew.

340

' The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee:
 The body and I pulled at one rope,
 But he said nought to me.'

' I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
 ' Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corpses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest:

But not by the souls
 of the men, nor by
 demons of earth or
 middle air, but by a
 blessed troop of angelic
 spirits, sent down
 by the invocation of
 the guardian saint.

' For when it dawned—they dropped their
 arms, 350

And clustered round the mast;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
 mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.



• Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

• Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

• And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

• It ceased: yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

• Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

• Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The Spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

380

The lonesome Spirit
from the South Pole
carries on the ship as
far as the line, in
obedience to the angelic
troop, but still re-
quireth vengeance.



' The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean:
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

' Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound: 390
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

' How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 But ere my living life returned,
 I heard and in my soul discerned
 Two Voices in the air.

The Polar Spirit's
 fellow-demons, the
 invisible inhabitants
 of the element, take
 part in his wrong; and
 two of them relate,
 one to the other, that
 penance long and heavy
 for the ancient Mariner
 hath been accorded to
 the Polar Spirit, who
 returneth southward.

' "Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
 By Him who died on cross,
 With his cruel bow he laid full low 400
 The harmless Albatross.

' "The Spirit who bideth by himself
 In the land of mist and snow,
 He loved the bird that loved the man
 Who shot him with his bow.' "

' The other was a softer voice,
 As soft as honey-dew:
 Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
 And penance more will do." '



PART VI

First Voice :

"But tell me, tell me! speak again, 410
 Thy soft response renewing—
 What makes that ship drive on so fast?
 What is the ocean doing?"

Second Voice :

"Still as a slave before his lord,
 The ocean hath no blast;
 His great bright eye most silently
 Up to the Moon is cast—
 If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see! how graciously 420
 She looketh down on him."

First Voice :

"But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind?"

The Mariner hath
 been cast into a trance
 for the angelic power
 causeth the vessel to
 drive northward faster
 than human life could
 endure.

Second Voice :

"The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind.
 Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated:
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated."



' I woke, and we were sailing on

As in a gentle weather:

'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was
high;

430 The supernatural
motion is retarded;
the Mariner awakes,
and his penance
begins anew.

The dead men stood together.

' All stood together on the deck,

For a charnel-dungeon fitter:

All fixed on me their stony eyes,

That in the Moon did glitter.

' The pang, the curse, with which they
died,

Had never passed away:

I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440

Nor turn them up to pray.

' And now the spell was snapt: once more

I viewed the ocean green,

And looked far forth, yet little saw

Of what had else been seen—

The curse is finally
expiated.

' Like one, that on a lonesome road

Doth walk in fear and dread,

And having once turned round walks on,

And turns no more his head;

Because he knows a frightful fiend

Doth close behind him tread. 450

' But soon there breathed a wind on me

Nor sound nor motion made:

Its path was not upon the sea,

In ripple or in shade.



‘ It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

‘ Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too;
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

‘ Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

And the ancient
Mariner beholdeth his
native country.

‘ We drifted o’er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
Oh let me be awake, my God! 470
Or let me sleep alway.

‘ The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

‘ The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

‘ And the bay was white with silent light, 480
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

The Angelic spirit
leave the dead bodies,



' A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

And appear in their
own forms of light.

' Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

490

' This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

' This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice: but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

' But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer:
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

500

' The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

' I saw a third—I heard his voice.
It is the Hermit good!

He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.

510

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

' This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

The Hermit of the
Wood,

' He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump: 520
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

' The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
" Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?"

" Strange, by faith!" the Hermit said—
And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those
sails,

Approacheth the ship
with wonder.

' "How thin they are and sere! 530
I never saw aught alike to them,
Unless perchance it were

' "Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

' "Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—"
(The Pilot made reply)
" I am a-fear'd."—" Push on, push on!" 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.





' The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship
And straight a sound was heard.

' Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ship suddenly
sinketh.

' Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days
drowned

The ancient Mariner
is saved in the Pilot's
boat.

My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

' Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

' I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

' I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."



* And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!”
The Hermit crossed his brow,
“Say quick,” quoth he, “I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?”

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him ; and the penance of life falls on him.

'Forthwith this frame of mine was
wrenched

With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580
And then it left me free.

' Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land.

' I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

' What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!



' O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

600

' O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
'To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

' To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

' Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

610

And to teach by his
own example, love and
reverence to all things
that God made and
loveth.

' He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
'Turned from the bridegroom's door.

620

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.



P. B. Shelley

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under, 10
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits; 20
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains:
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30



34 UNIVERSITY ENGLISH SELECTIONS

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead:
As on the jag on a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea
beneath,

Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl; 60



The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my
chair,
Is the million-coloured bow: 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex
gleams
Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from
the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

John Keats

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S
'HOMER'

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman Speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken; 10
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ODE TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, 5
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,



And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease; 10
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy
cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; 15
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy
hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined
flowers;

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by
hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are
they?

Think not of them,—thou hast thy music too,
While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day 25
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn; 30
Hedge-cricket sing, and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Lord Tennyson

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin
fades 20

For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were



For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought
 with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; 50
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the
 deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my
 friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite



40 UNIVERSITY ENGLISH SELECTIONS

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we
 are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

Lascelles Abercrombie

THE STREAM'S SONG

Make way, make way,
 You thwarting stones;
 Room for my play,
 Serious ones.

Do you not fear,
 O rocks and boulders,
 To feel my laughter
 On your grave shoulders?

Do you not know
 My joy at length 10
 Will all wear out
 Your solemn strength?



You will not for ever
Cumber my play;
With joy and a song
I clear my way.

Your faith of rock
Shall yield to me,
And be carried away
By the song of my glee.

20

Crumble, crumble,
Voiceless things;
No faith can last
That never sings.

For the last hour
To joy belongs;
The steadfast perish,
But not the songs.

Yet for a while
Thwart me, O boulders;
I need for laughter
Your serious shoulders.

30

And when my singing
Has razed you quite,
I shall have lost
Half my delight.

**Rupert Brooke****THE SOLDIER**

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less 10
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England
given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Wilfred Owen**FUTILITY**

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.



Think how it wakes the seeds—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides 10
Full-nerved,—still warm,—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?



THE BOY COMES HOME

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By A. A. MILNE



CHARACTERS

UNCLE JAMES.

AUNT EMILY.

PHILIP.

MARY.

MRS. HIGGINS.



THE BOY COMES HOME

SCENE: *A room in UNCLE JAMES'S house in the Cromwell Road.*

TIME: *The day after the War.*

Any room in UNCLE JAMES'S house is furnished in heavy mid-Victorian style; this particular morning-room is perhaps solider and more respectable even than the others, from the heavy table in the middle of it to the heavy engravings on the walls. There are two doors to it. The one at the back opens into the hall, the one at the side into the dining-room.

PHILIP comes in from the hall and goes into the dining-room. Apparently he finds nothing there, for he returns to the morning-room, looks about him for a moment and then rings the bell. It is ten o'clock, and he wants his breakfast. He picks up the paper, and sits in a heavy armchair in front of the fire—a pleasant-looking well-built person of twenty-three, with an air of decisiveness about him. MARY, the parlour-maid, comes in.

MARY. Did you ring, Master Philip?

PHILIP [*absently*]. Yes; I want some breakfast, please, Mary.

MARY [*coldly*]. Breakfast has been cleared away an hour ago.

PHILIP. Exactly. That's why I rang. You can boil me a couple of eggs or something. And coffee, not tea.



MARY. I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say?

PHILIP [*getting up*]. Who is Mrs. Higgins?

MARY. The cook. And she's not used to being put about like this.

PHILIP. Do you think she'll say something?

MARY. I don't know *what* she'll say.

PHILIP. You needn't tell me, you know, if you don't want to. Anyway, I don't suppose it will shock me. One gets used to it in the Army. [*He smiles pleasantly at her.*]

MARY. Well, I'll do what I can, sir. But breakfast at eight sharp is the master's rule, just as it used to be before you went away to the war.

PHILIP. Before I went away to the war I did a lot of silly things. Don't drag them up now. [*Mose curtly*] Two eggs, and if there's a ham bring that along too.

[*He turns away.*]

MARY [*doubtfully, as she prepares to go*]. Well, I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say.

[*As she goes out she makes way for AUNT EMILY to come in, a kind-hearted mid-Victorian lady who has never had any desire for the vote.*]

EMILY. There you are, Philip! Good morning, dear. Did you sleep well?

PHILIP. Rather; splendidly, thanks, Aunt Emily. How are you? [*He kisses her.*]

EMILY. And did you have a good breakfast? Naughty boy to be late for it. I always thought they had to get up so early in the Army.

PHILIP. They do. That's why they're so late when they get out of the Army.

EMILY. Dear me! I should have thought a habit of four years would have stayed with you.

PHILIP. Every morning for four years, as I've shot out of bed, I've said to myself, "Wait! A time will come." [*Smiling*] That doesn't really give a habit a chance.

EMILY. Well, I daresay you wanted your sleep out. I was so afraid that a really cosy bed would keep you awake after all those years in the trenches.

PHILIP. Well, one isn't in the trenches all the time. And one gets leave—if one's an officer.

EMILY [*reproachfully*]. You didn't spend much of it with us, Philip.

PHILIP [*taking her hands*]. I know; but you did understand, didn't you dear?

EMILY. We're not very gay, and I know you must have wanted gaiety for the little time you had. But I think your Uncle James felt it. After all, dear, you've lived with us for some years, and he is your guardian.

PHILIP. I know. *You've* been a darling to me always, Aunt Emily. But [*awkwardly*] Uncle James and I—

EMILY. Of course, he is a *little* difficult to get on with. I'm more used to him. But I'm sure he really is very fond of you, Philip.

PHILIP. H'm! I always used to be frightened of him. . . . I suppose he's just the same. He seemed just the same last night—and he still has breakfast at eight o'clock. Been making pots of money, I suppose?

EMILY. He never tells me exactly, but he did speak once about the absurdity of the excess-profits tax. You see, jam is a thing the Army wants.

PHILIP. It certainly gets it.

EMILY. It was so nice for him, because it made him feel he was doing his bit, helping the poor men in the trenches.

Enter MARY

MARY. Mrs. Higgins wishes to speak to you, ma'am.

[*She looks at PHILIP as much as to say, "There you are!"*]

EMILY [*getting up*]. Yes, I'll come. [*To PHILIP*] I think I'd better just see what she wants, Philip.

PHILIP [*firmly to MARY*]. Tell Mrs. Higgins to come here. [*MARY hesitates and looks at her mistress.*] At once, please. [*Exit MARY.*]

EMILY [*upset*]. Philip, dear, I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say——

PHILIP. No; nobody seems to. I thought we might really find out for once.

EMILY [*going towards the door*]. Perhaps I'd better go——

PHILIP [*putting his arm round her waist*]. Oh no, you mustn't. You see, she really wants to see *me*.

EMILY. You?

PHILIP. Yes; I ordered breakfast five minutes ago.

EMILY. Philip! My poor boy! Why didn't you tell me? And I daresay I could have got it for you. Though I don't know what Mrs. Higgins——

[*An extremely angry voice is heard outside, and MRS. HIGGINS, stout and aggressive, comes in.*]



MRS. HIGGINS [*truculently*]. You sent for me, ma'am?

EMILY [*nervously*]. Yes—er—I think if you—perhaps—

PHILIP [*calmly*]. I sent for you, Mrs. Higgins. I want some breakfast. Didn't Mary tell you?

MRS. HIGGINS. Breakfast is at eight o'clock. It always has been as long as I've been in this house, and always will be until I get further orders.

PHILIP. Well, you've just got further orders. Two eggs, and if there's a ham—

MRS. HIGGINS. Orders. We're talking about orders. From whom in this house do I take orders, may I ask?

PHILIP. In this case from me.

MRS. HIGGINS [*playing her trump-card*]. In that case, ma'am, I wish to give a month's notice from to-day. *Inclusive*.

PHILIP [*quickly, before his aunt can say anything*]. Certainly. In fact, you'd probably prefer it if my aunt gave you notice, and then you could go at once. We can easily arrange that. [*To AUNT EMILY as he takes out a fountain-pen and cheque-book*] What do you pay her?

EMILY [*faintly*]. Forty-five pounds.

PHILIP [*writing on his knee*]. Twelves into forty-five . . . [*Pleasantly to MRS. HIGGINS, but without looking up*] I hope you don't mind a Cox's cheque. Some people do; but this is quite a good one. [*Tearing it out*] Here you are.

MRS. HIGGINS [*taken aback*]. What's this?

PHILIP. Your wages instead of notice. Now you can go at once.

MRS. HIGGINS. Who said anything about going?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. I'm sorry; I thought *you* did.

MRS. HIGGINS. If it's only a bit of breakfast, I don't say but what I mightn't get it, if I'm asked decent.

PHILIP [*putting back the cheque*]. Then let me say again, "Two eggs, ham and coffee." And Mary can bring the ham up at once, and I'll get going on that. [*Turning away*] Thanks very much.

MRS. HIGGINS. Well, I—well—well! [*Exit speechless.*]

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Is that all she ever says? It isn't much to worry about.

EMILY. Philip, how could you! I should have been terrified.

PHILIP. Well, you see, I've done your job for two years out there.

EMILY. What job?

PHILIP. Mess President. . . . I think I'll go and see about that ham.

[*He smiles at her and goes out into the dining-room. AUNT EMILY wanders round the room, putting a few things tidy as is her habit, when she is interrupted by the entrance of UNCLE JAMES. JAMES is not a big man, nor an impressive one in his black morning-coat; and his thin straggly beard, now going grey, does not hide a chin of any great power; but he has a severity which passes for strength with the weak.*]

JAMES. Philip down yet?



EMILY. He's just having his breakfast.

JAMES [*looking at his watch*]. Ten o'clock. [*Snapping it shut and putting it back*] Ten o'clock. I say ten o'clock, Emily.

EMILY. Yes, dear, I heard you.

JAMES. You don't say anything?

EMILY [*vaguely*]. I expect he's tired after that long war.

JAMES. That's no excuse for not being punctual. I suppose he learnt punctuality in the Army?

EMILY. I expect he learnt it, James, but I understood him to say that he'd forgotten it.

JAMES. Then the sooner he learns it again the better. I particularly stayed away from the office to-day in order to talk things over with him, and [*looking at his watch*] here's ten o'clock—past ten—and no sign of him. I'm practically throwing away a day.

EMILY. What are you going to talk to him about?

JAMES. His future, naturally. I have decided that the best thing he can do is to come into the business at once.

EMILY. Are you really going to talk it over with him, James, or are you just going to tell him that he *must* come?

JAMES [*surprised*]. What do you mean? What's the difference? Naturally we shall talk it over first, and—er—naturally he'll fall in with my wishes.

EMILY. I suppose he can hardly help himself, poor boy.

JAMES. Not until he's twenty-five, anyhow. When he's twenty-five he can have his own money and do what he likes with it.

EMILY [*timidly*]. But I think you ought to consult ~~him~~ a little, dear. After all, he *has* been fighting for us.

JAMES [*with his back to the fire*]. Now that's the sort of silly sentiment that there's been much too much of. I object to it strongly. I don't want to boast, but I think I may claim to have done my share. I gave up my nephew to my country, and I—er—suffered from the shortage of potatoes to an extent that you probably didn't realize. Indeed, if it hadn't been for your fortunate discovery about that time that you didn't really like potatoes, I don't know how we should have carried on. And, as I think I've told you before, the excess-profits tax seemed to me a singularly stupid piece of legislation—but I paid it. And I don't go boasting about how much I paid.

EMILY [*unconvinced*]. Well, I think that Philip's four years out there have made him more of a man; he doesn't seem somehow like a boy who can be told what to do. I'm sure they've taught him something.

JAMES. I've no doubt that they've taught him something about—er—bombs and—er—which end a revolver goes off, and how to form fours. But I don't see that that sort of thing helps him to decide upon the most suitable career for a young man in after-war conditions.

EMILY. Well, I can only say you'll find him different.

JAMES. I didn't notice any particular difference last night.

EMILY. I think you'll find him rather more—I can't quite think of the word, but Mrs. Higgins could tell you what I mean.



THE BOY COMES HOME

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JAMES. Of course, if he likes to earn his living any other way, he may; but I don't see how he proposes to do it so long as I hold the purse-strings. [*Looking at his watch*] Perhaps you'd better tell him that I cannot wait any longer.

[*EMILY opens the door leading into the dining-room and talks through it to PHILIP.*]

EMILY. Philip, your uncle is waiting to see you before he goes to the office. Will you be long, dear?

PHILIP [*from the dining-room*]. Is he in a hurry?

JAMES [*shortly*]. Yes.

EMILY. He says he *is* rather, dear.

PHILIP. Couldn't he come and talk in here? It wouldn't interfere with my breakfast.

JAMES. No.

EMILY. He says he'd rather you came to *him*, darling.

PHILIP [*resigned*]. Oh, well.

EMILY [*to JAMES*]. He'll be here directly, dear. Just sit down in front of the fire and make yourself comfortable with the paper. He won't keep you long.

[*She arranges him.*]

JAMES [*taking the paper*]. The morning is not the time to make oneself comfortable. It's a most dangerous habit. I nearly found myself dropping off in front of the fire just now. I don't like this hanging about, wasting the day.

[*He opens the paper.*]

EMILY. You should have had a nice sleep, dear, while you could. We were up so late last night listening to Philip's stories.

JAMES. Yes, yes. [*He begins a yawn and stifles it hurriedly.*] You mustn't neglect your duties, Emily. I've no doubt you have plenty to do.

EMILY. All right, James, then I'll leave you. But don't be hard on the boy.

JAMES [*sleepily*]. I shall be just, Emily; you can rely upon that.

EMILY [*going to the door*]. I don't think that's quite what I meant. [*She goes out.*]

[JAMES, who is now quite comfortable, begins to nod. He wakes up with a start, turns over the paper, and nods again. Soon he is breathing deeply with closed eyes.]

PHILIP [*coming in*]. Sorry to have kept you waiting, but I was a bit late for breakfast. [*He takes out his pipe.*] Are we going to talk business or what?

JAMES [*taking out his watch*]. A bit late! I make it just two hours.

PHILIP [*pleasantly*]. All right, Uncle James. Call it two hours late. Or twenty-two hours early for to-morrow's breakfast, if you like.

[*He sits down in a chair on the opposite side of the table from his uncle, and lights his pipe.*]

JAMES. You smoke now?

PHILIP [*staggered*]. I what?

JAMES [*nodding at his pipe*]. You smoke?

PHILIP. Good heavens! what do you think we did in France?

JAMES. Before you start smoking all over the house, I should have thought you would have asked your aunt's permission.

[PHILIP looks at him in amazement, and then goes to the door.]

PHILIP [calling]. Aunt Emily! . . . Aunt Emily! . . . Do you mind my smoking in here?

AUNT EMILY [from upstairs]. Of course not, darling.

PHILIP [to JAMES, as he returns to his chair]. Of course not, darling. [He puts back his pipe in his mouth.]

JAMES. Now, understand once and for all, Philip, while you remain in my house I expect not only punctuality, but also civility and respect. I will not have impertinence.

PHILIP [unimpressed]. Well, that's what I want to talk to you about, Uncle James. About staying in your house, I mean.

JAMES. I don't know what you do mean.

PHILIP. Well, we don't get on too well together, and I thought perhaps I'd better take rooms somewhere. You could give me an allowance until I came into my money. Or I suppose you could give me the money now if you really liked. I don't quite know how father left it to me.

JAMES [coldly]. You come into your money when you are twenty-five. Your father very wisely felt that to trust a large sum to a mere boy of twenty-one was simply putting temptation in his way. Whether I have the power or not to alter his dispositions, I certainly don't propose to do so.

PHILIP. If it comes to that, I am twenty-five.



JAMES. Indeed? I had an impression that that event took place in about two years' time. When did you become twenty-five, may I ask?

PHILIP [*quietly*]. It was on the Somme. We were attacking the next day and my company was in support. We were in a so-called trench on the edge of a wood—a damned rotten place to be, and we got hell. The company commander sent back to ask if we could move. The C.O. said, "Certainly not; hang on." We hung on; doing nothing, you know—just hanging on and waiting for the next day. Of course, the Boche knew all about that. He had it on us nicely. . . . [*Sadly*] Poor old Billy! he was one of the best—our company commander, you know. They got him, poor devil! That left *me* in command of the company. I sent a runner back to ask if I could move. Well, I'd had a bit of a scout on my own and found a sort of trench five hundred yards to the right. Not what *you'd* call a trench, of course, but compared to that wood—well, it was absolutely Hyde Park. I described the position and asked if I could go there. My man never came back. I waited an hour and sent another man. He went west too. Well, I wasn't going to send a third. It was murder. So I had to decide. We'd lost about half the company by this time, you see. Well, there were three things I could do—hang on, move to this other trench, against orders, or go back myself and explain the situation. . . . I moved. . . . And then I went back to the C.O. and told him I'd moved. . . . And then I went back to the company again. . . . [*Quietly*] That was when I became twenty-five . . . or thirty-five . . . or forty-five.

JAMES [*recovering himself with an effort*]. Ah yes, yes. [*He coughs awkwardly.*] No doubt prints like that frequently crop up in the trenches. I am glad that you did well out there, and I'm sure your Colonel would speak kindly of you; but when it comes to choosing a career for you now that you have left the Army, my advice is not altogether to be despised. Your father evidently thought so, or he would not have entrusted you to my care.

PHILIP. My father didn't foresee this war.

JAMES. Yes, yes, but you make too much of this war. All you young boys seem to think you've come back from France to teach us our business. You'll find that it is you who'll have to learn, not we.

PHILIP. I'm quite prepared to learn; in fact I want to.

JAMES. Excellent. Then we can consider that settled.

PHILIP. Well, we haven't settled yet what business I'm going to learn.

JAMES. I don't think that's very difficult. I propose to take you into my business. You'll start at the bottom, of course, but it will be a splendid opening for you.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. I see. So you've decided it for me? The jam business.

JAMES [*sharply*]. Is there anything to be ashamed of in that?

PHILIP. Oh no, nothing at all. Only it doesn't happen to appeal to me.

JAMES. If you knew which side your bread was buttered, it would appeal to you very considerably.

PHILIP. I'm afraid I can't see the butter for the jam.



JAMES. I don't want any silly jokes of that sort. You were glad enough to get it out there, I've no doubt.

PHILIP. Oh yes. Perhaps that's why I'm so sick of it now. . . . No, it's no good, Uncle James; you must think of something else.

JAMES [*with a sneer*]. Perhaps *you've* thought of something else?

PHILIP. Well, I had some idea of being an architect--

JAMES. You propose to start learning to be an architect at twenty-three?

PHILIP [*smiling*]. Well, I couldn't start before, could I?

JAMES. Exactly. And now you'll find it's too late.

PHILIP. Is it? Aren't there going to be any more architects, or doctors, or solicitors, or barristers? Because we've all lost four years of our lives, are all the professions going to die out?

JAMES. And how old do you suppose you'll be before you're earning money as an architect?

PHILIP. The usual time, whatever that may be. If I'm four years behind, so is everybody else.

JAMES. Well, I think it's high time you began to earn a living at once.

PHILIP. Look here, Uncle James, do you really think that you can treat me like a boy who's just left school? Do you think four years at the front have made no difference at all?

JAMES. If there had been any difference, I should have expected it to take the form of an increased readiness to obey orders and recognize authority.

PHILIP [*regretfully*]. You are evidently determined to have a row. Perhaps I had better tell you once and for all that I refuse to go into the turnip and vegetable marrow business.

JAMES [*thumping the table angrily*]. And perhaps I'd better tell *you*, sir, once and for all, that I don't propose to allow rudeness from an impertinent young puppy.

PHILIP [*reminiscently*]. I remember annoying our Brigadier once. He was covered with red, had a very red face, about twenty medals, and a cold blue eye. He told me how angry he was for about five minutes while I stood to attention. I'm afraid you aren't nearly so impressive, Uncle James.

JAMES [*rather upset*]. Oh! [*Recovering himself*] Fortunately I have other means of impressing you. The power of the purse goes a long way in this world. I propose to use it.

PHILIP. I see. . . . Yes . . . that's rather awkward, isn't it?

JAMES [*pleasantly*]. I think you'll find it very awkward.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. Yes.

[*With an amused laugh JAMES settles down to his paper as if the interview were over.*]

PHILIP [*to himself*]. I suppose I shall have to think of another argument.

[*He takes out a revolver from his pocket and fondles it affectionately.*]

JAMES [*looking up suddenly as he is doing this—amazed*]. What on earth are you doing?



PHILIP. Souvenir from France. Do you know, Uncle James, that this revolver has killed about twenty Germans?

JAMES [*shortly*]. Oh! Well, don't go playing about with it here, or you'll be killing Englishmen before you know where you are.

PHILIP. Well, you never know. [*He raises it leisurely and points it at his uncle.*] It's a nice little weapon.

JAMES [*angrily*]. Put it down, sir. You ought to have grown out of monkey tricks like that in the Army. You ought to know better than to point an unloaded revolver at anybody. That's the way accidents always happen.

PHILIP. Not when you've been on a revolver course and know all about it. Besides, it is loaded.

JAMES [*very angry because he is frightened suddenly*]. Put it down at once, sir. [*PHILIP turns it away from him and examines it carelessly.*] What's the matter with you? Have you gone mad suddenly?

PHILIP [*mildly*]. I thought you'd be interested in it. It's shot such a lot of Germans.

JAMES. Well, it won't want to shoot any more, and the sooner you get rid of it the better.

PHILIP. I wonder. Does it ever occur to you, Uncle James, that there are about a hundred thousand people in England who own revolvers, who are quite accustomed to them and—who have nobody to practise on now?

JAMES. No, sir, it certainly doesn't.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. I wonder if it will make any difference. You know, one gets so used to potting at people. It's rather difficult to realize suddenly that one oughtn't to.

JAMES [*getting up*]. I don't know what the object of all this tomfoolery is, if it has one. But you understand that I expect you to come to the office with me to-morrow at nine o'clock. Kindly see that you're punctual.

[*He turns to go away.*]

PHILIP [*softly*]. Uncle James.

JAMES [*over his shoulder*]. I have no more——

PHILIP [*in his parade voice*]. Damn it, sir! stand to attention when you talk to an officer! [JAMES *instinctively turns round and stiffens himself.*] That's better; you can sit down if you like.

[*He motions JAMES to his chair with the revolver.*]

JAMES [*going nervously to his chair*]. What does this bluff mean?

PHILIP. It isn't bluff, it's quite serious. [*Pointing the revolver at his uncle*] Do sit down.

JAMES [*sitting down*]. Threats, eh?

PHILIP. Persuasion.

JAMES. At the point of the revolver? You settle your arguments by force? Good heavens, sir! this is just the very thing that we were fighting to put down.

PHILIP. *We* were fighting! *We!* *We!* Uncle, you're a humorist.

JAMES. Well, "you," if you prefer it. Although those of us who stayed at home——

PHILIP. Yes, never mind about the excess profits now. I can tell you quite well what we fought for. We used force to put down force. That's what I'm doing now. You were



going to use force—the force of money—to make me do what you wanted. Now I'm using force to stop it.

[He levels the revolver again.]

JAMES. You're—you're going to shoot your old uncle?

PHILIP. Why not? I've shot lots of old uncles—Landsturmiers.

JAMES. But those were Germans! It's different shooting Germans. You're in England now. You couldn't have a crime on your conscience like that.

PHILIP. Ah, but you mustn't think that after four years of war one has quite the same ideas about the sanctity of human life. How could one?

JAMES. You'll find that juries have kept pretty much the same ideas, I fancy.

PHILIP. Yes, but revolvers often go off accidentally. You said so yourself. This is going to be the purest accident. Can't you see it in the papers? "The deceased's nephew, who was obviously upset——"

JAMES. I suppose you think it's brave to come back from the front and threaten a defenceless man with a revolver? Is that the sort of fair play they teach you in the Army?

PHILIP. Good heavens! of course it is. You don't think that you wait until the other side has got just as many guns as you before you attack? You're really rather lucky. Strictly speaking, I ought to have thrown half a dozen bombs at you first. *[Taking one out of his pocket]* As it happens, I've only got one.

JAMES *[thoroughly alarmed]*. Put that back at once.

PHILIP [*putting down the revolver and taking it in his hands*]. You hold in the right hand—so—taking care to keep the lever down. Then you take the pin in the finger—so, and—but perhaps this doesn't interest you?

JAMES [*edging his chair away*]. Put it down at once, sir. Good heavens! anything might happen.

PHILIP [*putting it down and taking up the revolver again*]. Does it ever occur to you, Uncle James, that there are about three million people in England who know all about bombs, and how to throw them, and——

JAMES. It certainly does not occur to me. I should never dream of letting these things occur to me.

PHILIP [*looking at the bomb regretfully*]. It's rather against my principles as a soldier, but just to make things a bit more fair—[*generously*] you shall have it.

[*He holds it out to him suddenly.*]

JAMES [*shrinking back again*]. Certainly not, sir. It might go off at any moment.

PHILIP [*putting it back in his pocket*]. Oh no; it's quite useless; there's no detonator. . . . [*Sternly*] Now, then, let's talk business.

JAMES. What do you want me to do?

PHILIP. Strictly speaking, you should be holding your hands over your head and saying "Kamerad!" However, I'll let you off that. All I ask from you is that you should be reasonable.

JAMES. And if I refuse, you'll shoot me?

PHILIP. Well, I don't quite know, Uncle James. I expect we should go through this little scene again to-morrow.

You haven't enjoyed it, have you? Well, there's lots more of it to come. We'll rehearse it every day. One day, if you go on being unreasonable, the thing will go off. Of course, you think that I shouldn't have the pluck to fire. But you can't be quite certain. It's a hundred to one that I shan't—only I might. Fear—it's a horrible thing. Elderly men die of it sometimes.

JAMES. Pooh! I'm not to be bluffed like that.

PHILIP [*suddenly*]. You're quite right; you're not that sort. I made a mistake. [*Aiming carefully*] I shall have to do it straight off, after all. One—two——

JAMES [*on his knees, with uplifted hands, in an agony of terror*]. Philip! Mercy! What are your terms?

PHILIP [*picking him up by the scruff, and helping him into the chair*]. Good man, that's the way to talk. I'll get them for you. Make yourself comfortable in front of the fire till I come back. Here's the paper.

[*He gives his uncle the paper, and goes out into the hall.*]

[*James opens his eyes with a start and looks round him in a bewildered way. He rubs his head, takes out his watch and looks at it, and then stares round the room again. The door from the dining-room opens, and PHILIP comes in with a piece of toast in his hand.*]

PHILIP [*his mouth full*]. You wanted to see me, Uncle James?

JAMES [*still bewildered*]. That's all right, my boy, that's all right. What have you been doing?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Breakfast. [*Putting the last piece in his mouth*] Rather late, I'm afraid.

JAMES. That's all right. [*He laughs awkwardly.*]

PHILIP. Anything the matter? You don't look your usual bright self.

JAMES. I—er—seem to have dropped asleep in front of the fire. Most unusual thing for me to have done. Most unusual.

PHILIP. Let that be a lesson to you not to get up so early. Of course, if you're in the Army you can't help yourself. Thank heaven I'm out of it, and my own master again.

JAMES. Ah, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. Sit down, Philip. [*He indicates the chair by the fire.*]

PHILIP [*taking a chair by the table*]. You have that, uncle; I shall be all right here.

JAMES [*hastily*]. No, no; you come here. [*He gives PHILIP the armchair and sits by the table himself.*] I should be dropping off again. [*He laughs awkwardly.*]

PHILIP. Righto.

[*He puts his hand in his pocket.* UNCLE JAMES shivers and looks at him in horror. PHILIP brings out his pipe, and a sickly grin of relief comes into JAMES'S face.

JAMES. I suppose you smoked a lot in France?

PHILIP. Rather! Nothing else to do. It's allowed in here.



JAMES [*hastily*]. Yes, yes, of course. [PHILIP *lights his pipe.*] Well now, Philip, what are you going to do, now you've left the Army?

PHILIP [*promptly*]. Burn my uniform and sell my revolver.

JAMES [*starting at the word "revolver"*]. Sell your revolver, eh?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Well, I don't want it now, do I?

JAMES. No. . . . Oh no. . . . Oh, most certainly not, I should say. Oh, I can't see why you should want it at all. [*With an uneasy laugh*] You're in England now. No need for revolvers here—eh?

PHILIP [*staring at him*]. Well, no, I hope not.

JAMES [*hastily*]. Quite so. Well now, Philip, what next? We must find a profession for you.

PHILIP [*yawning*]. I suppose so I haven't really thought about it much.

JAMES. You never wanted to be an architect?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Architect?

[JAMES *rubs his head and wonders what made him think of architect.*

JAMES. Or anything like that.

PHILIP. It's a bit late, isn't it?

JAMES. Well, if you're four years behind, so is everybody else. [*He feels vaguely that he has heard this argument before.*]

PHILIP [*smiling*]. To tell the truth, I don't feel I mind much anyway. Anything you like—except a commissionaire. I absolutely refuse to wear uniform again.



JAMES. How would you like to come into the business?

PHILIP. The jam business? Well, I don't know. You wouldn't want me to salute you in the mornings?

JAMES. My dear boy, no!

PHILIP. All right, I'll try it if you like. I don't know if I shall be any good—what do you do?

JAMES. It's your experience in managing and—er—handling men which I hope will be of value.

PHILIP. Oh, I can do that all right. [*Stretching himself luxuriously*] Uncle James, do you realize that I'm never going to salute again, or wear a uniform, or get wet—really wet, I mean—or examine men's feet, or stand to attention when I'm spoken to, or—oh, lots more things? And best of all, I'm never going to be frightened again. Have you ever known what it is to be afraid—really afraid?

JAMES [*embarrassed*]. I—er—well—— [*He coughs.*]

PHILIP. No, you couldn't—not really afraid of death, I mean. Well, that's over now. Good lord! I could spend the rest of my life in the British Museum and be happy. . . .

JAMES [*getting up*]. All right, we'll try you in the office. I expect you want a holiday first, though.

PHILIP [*getting up*]. My dear uncle, this is holiday. Being in London is holiday. Buying an evening paper—wearing a waistcoat again—running after a bus—anything—it's all holiday.

JAMES. All right, then, come along with me now, and I'll introduce you to Mr. Bamford.

PHILIP. Right. Who's he?



JAMES. Our manager. A little stiff, but a very good fellow. He'll be delighted to hear that you are coming into the firm.

PHILIP [*smiling*]. Perhaps I'd better bring my revolver, in case he isn't.

JAMES [*laughing with forced heartiness as they go together to the door*]. Ha, ha! A good joke that! Ha, ha, ha! A good joke—but only a joke, of course. Ha, ha! He, he, he!

[PHILIP goes out. JAMES, following him, turns at the door, and looks round the room in a bewildered way. Was it a dream, or wasn't it? He will never be quite certain.]

CURTAIN



THE RISING OF THE MOON

BY LADY GREGORY



CHARACTERS

SERGEANT

POLICEMAN X

POLICEMAN B

A RAGGED MAN



THE RISING OF THE MOON

SCENE: *Side of a quay in a seaport town. Some posts and chains. A large barrel. Enter three POLICEMEN. Moonlight.*

[SERGEANT, *who is older than the others*, crosses the stage to R. and looks down steps. The others put down a pastepot and unroll a bundle of placard.

POLICEMAN B. I think this would be a good place to put up a notice. [He points to barrel.

POLICEMAN X. Better ask him. [Calls to SERGEANT.] Will this be a good place for a placard? [No answer.

POLICEMAN B. Will we put up a notice here on the barrel? [No answer.

SERGEANT. There's a flight of steps here that leads to the water. This is a place that should be minded well. If he got down here, his friends might have a boat to meet him; they might send it in here from outside.

POLICEMAN B. Would the barrel be a good place to put a notice up?

SERGEANT. It might; you can put it there.

[They paste the notice up.

SERGEANT [*reading it*]. Dark hair—dark eyes, smooth face, height five feet five—there's not much to take hold of in that—it's a pity I had no chance of seeing him before he broke out of gaol. They say he's a wonder, that it's he makes



all the plans for the whole organization. There isn't another man in Ireland would have broken gaol the way he did. He must have some friends among the gaolers.

POLICEMAN B. A hundred pounds is little enough for the Government to offer for him. You may be sure any man in the force that takes him will get promotion.

SERGEANT. I'll mind this place myself. I wouldn't wonder at all if he came this way. He might come slipping along there [*points to side of quay*], and his friends might be waiting for him there [*points down steps*], and once he got away it's little chance we'd have of finding him; it's maybe under a load of kelp he'd be in a fishing boat, and not one to help a married man that wants it to the reward.

POLICEMAN X. And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations.

SERGEANT. Well, we have to do our duty in the force. Haven't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn't for us. Well, hurry on, you have plenty of other places to placard yet, and come back here then to me. You can take the lantern. Don't be too long now. It's very lonesome here with nothing out the moon.

POLICEMAN B. It's a pity we can't stop with you. The Government should have brought more police into the town, with *him* in gaol, and at assize time too. Well, good luck to your watch. [*They go out.*]



SERGEANT [*walks up and down once or twice and looks at placard*]. A hundred pounds and promotion sure. There must be a great deal of spending in a hundred pounds. It's a pity some honest man not to be the better of that.

[A RAGGED MAN *appears at left and tries to slip past.*

SERGEANT *suddenly turns.*

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. I'm a poor ballad-singer, your honour. I thought to sell some of these [*holds out bundle of ballads*] to the sailors. [*He goes on.*

SERGEANT. Stop! Didn't I tell you to stop? You can't go on there.

MAN. Oh, very well. It's a hard thing to be poor. All the world's against the poor!

SERGEANT. Who are you?

MAN. You'd be as wise as myself if I told you, but I don't mind. I'm one Jimmy Walsh, a ballad-singer.

SERGEANT. Jimmy Walsh? I don't know that name.

MAN. Ah, sure, they know it well enough in Ennis. Were you ever in Ennis, Sergeant?

SERGEANT. What brought you here?

MAN. Sure, it's to the assizes I came, thinking I might make a few shillings here or there. It's in the one train with the judges I came.

SERGEANT. Well, if you came so far, you may as well go farther, for you'll walk out of this.

MAN. I will, I will; I'll just go on where I was going.

[*Goes towards steps.*



SERGEANT. Come back from those steps; no one has leave to pass down them to-night.

MAN. I'll just sit on the top of the steps till I see will some sailor buy a ballad off me that would give me my supper. They do be late going back to the ship. It's often I saw them in Cork carried down the quay in a hand-cart.

SERGEANT. Move on, I tell you. I won't have anyone lingering about the quay to-night.

MAN. Well, I'll go. It's the poor have the hard life! Maybe yourself might like one, Sergeant. Here's a good sheet now. [*Turns one over.*] *Content and a Pipe*—that's not much. *The Peeler and the Goat*—you wouldn't like that. *Johnny Hart*—that's a lovely song.

SERGEANT. Move on.

MAN. Ah, wait till you hear it. [*Sings:*
"There was a rich farmer's daughter lived near the town
of Ross;

She courted a Highland soldier, his name was Johnny Hart;
Says the mother to her daughter, 'I'll go distracted mad
If you marry that Highland soldier dressed up in Highland
plaid.' "

SERGEANT. Stop that noise.

[*MAN wraps up his ballads and shuffles towards the steps.*

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. Sure, you told me to be going, and I am going.

SERGEANT. Don't be a fool. I didn't tell you to go that way; I told you to go back to the town.

MAN. Back to the town, is it?



SERGEANT [*taking him by the shoulder and shoving him before him*]. Here, I'll show you the way. Be off with you. What are you stopping for?

MAN [*who has been keeping his eye on the notice, points to it*]. I think I know what you're waiting for, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. What's that to you?

MAN. And I know well the man you're waiting for—I know him well—I'll be going. [*He shuffles on.*]

SERGEANT. You know him? Come back here. What sort is he?

MAN. Come back is it, Sergeant? Do you want to have me killed?

SERGEANT. Why do you say that?

MAN. Never mind. I'm going. I wouldn't be in your shoes if the reward was ten times as much. [*Goes on off stage to L.*] Not if it was ten times as much.

SERGEANT [*rushing after him*]. Come back here, come back. [*Drags him back.*] What sort is he? Where did you see him?

MAN. I saw him in my own place, in the County Clare. I tell you you wouldn't like to be looking at him. You'd be afraid to be in the one place with him. There isn't a weapon he doesn't know the use of, and as to strength, his muscles are as hard as that board. [*Slaps barrel.*]

SERGEANT. Is he as bad as that?

MAN. He is then.

SERGEANT. Do you tell me so?

MAN. There was a poor man in our place, a sergeant from Ballyvaughan.—It was with a lump of stone he did it.

SERGEANT. I never heard of that.

MAN. And you wouldn't, Sergeant. It's not everything that happens gets into the papers. And there was a policeman in plain clothes, too. . . . It is in Limerick he was. . . . It was after the time of the attack on the police barrack at Kilmallock Moonlight. . . just like this . . . waterside. . . . Nothing was known for certain.

SERGEANT. Do you say so? It's a terrible country to belong to.

MAN. That's so, indeed! You might be standing there, looking out that way, thinking you saw him coming up this side of the quay [*points*], and he might be coming up this other side [*points*], and he'd be on you before you knew where you were.

SERGEANT. It's a whole troop of police they ought to put here to stop a man like that.

MAN. But if you'd like me to stop with you, I could be looking down this side. I could be sitting up here on this barrel.

SERGEANT. And you know him well, too?

MAN. I'd know him a mile off, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. But you wouldn't want to share the reward?

MAN. Is it a poor man like me, that has to be going the roads and singing in fairs, to have the name on him that he took a reward? But you don't want me. I'll be safer in the town.

SERGEANT. Well, you can stop.

MAN [*getting up on barrel*]. All right, Sergeant. I wonder, now, you're not tired out, Sergeant, walking up and down the way you are.



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SERGEANT. If I'm tired I'm used to it.

MAN. You might have hard work before you to-night yet. Take it easy while you can. There's plenty of room up here on the barrel, and you see farther when you're higher up.

SERGEANT. Maybe so. [*Gets up beside him on barrel, facing right. They sit back to back, looking different ways.*] You made me feel a bit queer with the way you talked.

MAN. Give me a match, Sergeant [*He gives it and MAN lights pipe*]; takes a draw yourself? It'll quiet you. Wait now till I give you a light, but you needn't turn round. Don't take your eye off the quay for the life of you.

SERGEANT. Never fear, I won't. [*Lights pipe. They both smoke.*] Indeed it's a hard thing to be in the force, out at night and no thanks for it, for all the danger we're in. And it's little we get but abuse from the people, and no choice but to obey our orders, and never asked when a man is sent into danger, if you are a married man with a family.

MAN [*sings*]:

"As through the hills I walked to view the hills and
shamrock plain,

I stood awhile where nature smiles to view the rocks and
streams,

On a matron fair I fixed my eyes beneath a fertile vale,
As she sang her song it was on the wrong of poor old
Granuaile."

SERGEANT. Stop that; that's no song to be singing in these times.



MAN. Ah, Sergeant, I was only singing to keep my heart up. It sinks when I think of him. To think of us two sitting here, and he creeping up the quay, maybe, to get to us.

SERGEANT. Are you keeping a good look-out?

MAN. I am; and for no reward too. Amn't I the foolish man? But when I saw a man in trouble, I never could help trying to get him out of it. What's that? Did something hit me? *[Rubs his heart.]*

SERGEANT *[patting him on the shoulder]*. You will get your reward in heaven.

MAN. I know that, I know that, Sergeant, but life is precious.

SERGEANT. Well, you can sing if it gives you more courage.

MAN *[sings]* :

" Her head was bare, her hands and feet with iron bands
were bound,

Her pensive strain and plaintive wail mingles with the
evening gale,

And the song she sang with mournful air, I am old
Granuaile.

Her lips so sweet that monarchs kissed . . . "

SERGEANT. That's not it. . . . " Her gown she wore was
stained with gore." . . . That's it—you missed that.

MAN. You're right, Sergeant, so it is; I missed it.
[Repeats line.] But to think of a man like you knowing a
song like that.

SERGEANT. There's many a thing a man might know and might not have any wish for.

MAN. Now, I dare say, Sergeant, in your youth, you used to be sitting up on a wall, the way you are sitting up on this barrel now, and the other lads beside you, and you singing *Granuaile*? . . .

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the *Shan Bhean Bhocht*? . . .

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the *Green on the Cape*?

SERGEANT. That was one of them.

MAN. And maybe the man you are watching for to-night used to be sitting on the wall, when he was young, and singing those same songs It's a queer world. . . .

SERGEANT. Whisht! . . . I think I see something coming It's only a dog.

MAN. And isn't it a queer world? . . . Maybe it's one of the boys you used to be singing with that time you will be arresting to-day or to-morrow, and sending into the dock. . . .

SERGEANT. That's true indeed.

MAN. And maybe one night, after you had been singing, if the other boys had told you some plan they had, some plan to free the country, you might have joined with them . . . and maybe it is you might be in trouble now.

SERGEANT. Well, who knows but I might? I had a great spirit in those days.

MAN. It's a queer world, Sergeant, and it's little any mother knows when she sees her child creeping on the floor

what might happen to it before it has gone through its life, or who will be who in the end.

SERGEANT. That's a queer thought now, and a true thought. Wait now till I think it out. . . . If it wasn't for the sense I have, and for my wife and family, and for me joining the force the time I did, it might be myself now would be after breaking gaol and hiding in the dark, and it might be him that's hiding in the dark and that got out of gaol would be sitting up where I am on this barrel. . . . And it might be myself would be creeping up trying to make my escape from himself, and it might be himself would be keeping the law, and myself would be breaking it, and myself would be trying maybe to put a bullet in his head, or to take up a lump of a stone the way you said he did . . . no, that myself did. . . . Oh! [*Gasps. After a pause.*] What's that?
[*Grasps MAN'S arm.*]

MAN [*jumps off barrel and listens, looking out over water*]. It's nothing, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. I thought it might be a boat. I had a notion there might be friends of his coming about the quays with a boat.

MAN. Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man.

SERGEANT. Well, if I was foolish then, that time's gone.

MAN. Maybe, Sergeant, it comes into your head sometimes, in spite of your belt and your tunic, that it might have been as well for you to have followed Granuaile.

SERGEANT. It's no business of yours what I think.



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MAN. Maybe, Sergeant, you'll be on the side of the country yet.

SERGEANT [*gets off barrel*]. Don't talk to me like that. I have my duties and I know them. [*Looks round.*] That was a boat; I hear the oars.

[*Goes to the steps and looks down.*]

MAN [*sings*]:

"O, then, tell me, Shawn O'Farrell,
Where the gathering is to be.
In the old spot by the river
Right well known to you and me!"

SERGEANT. Stop that? Stop that, I tell you!

MAN [*sings louder*]:

"One word more, for signal token,
Whistle up the marching tune,
With your pike upon your shoulder,
At the Rising of the Moon."

SERGEANT. If you don't stop that, I'll arrest you.

[*A whistle from below answers, repeating the air.*]

SERGEANT. That's a signal. [*Stands between him and steps.*] You must not pass this way Step farther back. . . . Who are you? You are no ballad-singer.

MAN. You needn't ask who I am; that placard will tell you. [*Points to placard.*]

SERGEANT. You are the man I am looking for.

MAN [*takes off hat and wig*. SERGEANT *seizes them*]. I am. There's a hundred pounds on my head. There is a



friend of mine below in a boat. He knows a safe place to bring me to.

SERGEANT [*looking still at hat and wig*]. It's a pity! It's a pity. You deceived me. You deceived me well.

MAN. I am a friend of Granuaile. There is a hundred pounds on my head.

SERGEANT. It's a pity, it's a pity!

MAN. Will you let me pass, or must I make you let me?

SERGEANT. I am in the force. I will not let you pass.

MAN. I thought to do it with my tongue. [*Puts hand in breast.*] What is that?

Voice of POLICEMAN X *outside*. Here, this is where we left him.

SERGEANT. It's my comrades coming.

MAN. You won't betray me . . . the friend of Granuaile.

[*Slips behind barrel.*]

Voice of POLICEMAN B. That was the last of the placards.

POLICEMAN X [*as they come in*]. If he makes his escape, it won't be unknown he'll make it.

[*SERGEANT puts hat and wig behind his back.*]

POLICEMAN B. Did anyone come this way?

SERGEANT [*after a pause*]. No one.

POLICEMAN B. No one at all?

SERGEANT. No one at all.

POLICEMAN B. We had no orders to go back to the station; we can stop along with you.

SERGEANT. I don't want you. There is nothing for you to do here.



POLICEMAN B. You bade us to come back here and keep watch with you.

SERGEANT. I'd sooner be alone. Would any man come this way and you making all that talk? It is better the place to be quiet.

POLICEMAN B. Well, we'll leave you the lantern anyhow.
[Hands it to him.]

SERGEANT. I don't want it. Bring it with you.

POLICEMAN B. You might want it. There are clouds coming up and you have the darkness of the night before you yet. I'll leave it over here on the barrel. *[Goes to barrel.]*

SERGEANT. Bring it with you, I tell you. No more talk.

POLICEMAN B. Well, I thought it might be a comfort to you. I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about into every dark corner *[doing so]* that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again.

[Flashes it about, now on the barrel, now on

SERGEANT.]

SERGEANT *[furiously]*. Be off, the two of you, yourselves and your lantern!

[They go out. MAN comes from behind barrel. He and SERGEANT stand looking at one another.]

SERGEANT. What are you waiting for?

MAN. For my hat, of course, and my wig. You wouldn't wish me to get my death of cold? *[SERGEANT gives them*

MAN [going towards steps]. Well, good night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn to-night, and



I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down . . . when we all change places at the Rising [*waves his hand and disappears*] of the Moon.

SERGEANT [*turning his back to audience and reading placard*]. A hundred pounds reward! A hundred pounds! [*Turns towards audience.*] I wonder, now, am I as great a fool as I think I am?

CURTAIN



THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

ONE dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the look-out for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name 'Mr. James Dillingham Young.'

The 'Dillingham' had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of 'Dillingham' looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called 'Jim' and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully



at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once

she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the 'Sofronie.'

'Will you buy my hair?' asked Della.

'I buy hair,' said Madame. 'Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it.'

Down rippled the brown cascade.

'Twenty dollars,' said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

'Give it to me quick,' said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on



account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

'If Jim doesn't kill me,' she said to herself, 'before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?'

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: 'Please, God, make him think I am still pretty.'

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she

had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

'Jim, darling,' she cried, 'don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say "Merry Christmas!" Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you.'

'You've cut off your hair?' asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour.

'Cut it off and sold it,' said Della. 'Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?'

Jim looked about the room curiously.

'You say your hair is gone?' he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

'You needn't look for it,' said Della. 'It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,' she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, 'but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?'

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.



'Don't make any mistake, Dell,' he said, 'about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first.'

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: 'My hair grows so fast, Jim!'

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, 'Oh, oh!'

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

'Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.'

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.



'Dell,' said he, 'let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.'

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

—*William Sydney Porter*

THE HOLY MAN (*After* TOLSTOY)

PAUL, the eldest son of Count Stroganoff, was only thirty-two when he was made a Bishop: he was the youngest dignitary in the Greek Church, yet his diocese was among the largest: it extended for hundreds of miles along the shore of the Caspian. Even as a youth Paul had astonished people by his sincerity and gentleness, and the honours paid to him seemed to increase his lovable qualities.

Shortly after his induction he set out to visit his whole diocese in order to learn the needs of the people. On this pastoral tour he took with him two older priests in the hope



that he might profit by their experience. After many disappointments he was forced to admit that they could only be used as aids to memory, or as secretaries; for they could not even understand his passionate enthusiasm. The life of Christ was the model the young Bishop set before himself, and he took joy in whatever pain or fatigue his ideal involved. His two priests thought it unbecoming in a Bishop to work so hard and to be so careless of 'dignity and state,' by which they meant ease and good living. At first they grumbled a good deal at the work and with apparent reason, for, indeed, the Bishop forgot himself in his mission, and as the tour went on his body seemed to waste away in the fire of his zeal.

After he had come to the extreme southern point of his diocese he took ship and began to work his way north along the coast, in order to visit all the fishing villages.

One afternoon, after a hard morning's work, he was seated on deck resting. The little ship lay becalmed a long way from the shore, for the water was shallow and the breeze had died down in the heat of the day.

There had been rain-clouds over the land, but suddenly the sun came out hotly and the Bishop caught sight of some roofs glistening rosy-pink in the sunshine a long way off.

'What place is that?' he asked the Captain.

'Krasnavodsk, I think it is called,' replied the Captain after some hesitation, 'a little nest between the mountains and the sea; a hundred souls perhaps in all.'

(Men are commonly called 'souls' in Russia as they are called 'hands' in England.)

'One hundred souls,' repeated the Bishop, 'shut away from the world; I must visit Krasnavodsk.'

The priests shrugged their shoulders but said nothing; they knew it was no use objecting or complaining. But this time the Captain came to their aid.



'It's twenty-five versts away,' he said, 'and the sailors are done up. You'll be able to get in easily enough, but coming out again against the sea-breeze will take hard rowing.'

'To-morrow is Sunday,' rejoined the Bishop, 'and the sailors will be able to rest all day. Please, Captain, tell them to get out the boat. I wouldn't ask for myself,' he added in a low voice.

The Captain understood; the boat was got out, and under her little lug-sail reached the shore in a couple of hours.

Lermontoff, the big helmsman, stepped at once into the shallow water and carried the Bishop on his back up the beach so that he shouldn't get wet. The two priests got to land as best they could.

At the first cottage the Bishop asked an old man, who was cutting sticks, where the church was.

'Church,' repeated the peasant, 'there isn't one.'

'Haven't you any pope, any priest here?' inquired the Bishop.

'What's that?'

'Surely,' replied the Bishop, 'you have some one here who visits the dying and prays with them, some one who attends to the sick women and children?'

'Oh, yes,' cried the old man, straightening himself: 'we have a holy man.'

'Holy man?' repeated the Bishop, 'who is he?'

'Oh, a good man, a saint,' replied the old peasant, 'he does everything for any one in need.'

'Is he a Christian?'

'I don't think so,' the old man rejoined, shaking his head, 'I've never heard that name.'

'Do you pay him for his services?' asked the Bishop.

'No, no,' was the reply, 'he would not take anything.'

'How does he live?' the Bishop probed farther.

'Like the rest of us he works in his little garden.'



'Show me where he lives: will you?' said the Bishop gently, and at once the old man put down his axe and led the way among the scattered huts.

In a few moments they came to the cottage standing in a square of cabbages. It was just like the other cottages in the village, poverty-stricken and weather-worn, wearing its patches without thought of concealment.

The old man opened the door:

'Some visitors for you, Ivanushka,' he said, standing aside to let the Bishop and his priests pass in.

The Bishop saw before him a broad, thin man of about sixty, dressed half like a peasant, half like a fisherman; he wore the usual sheepskin and high fisherman's boots. The only noticeable thing in his appearance was the way his silver hair and beard contrasted with the dark tan of his skin; his eyes were clear, blue, and steady.

'Come in, Excellency,' he said, 'come in,' and he hastily dusted a stool with his sleeve for the Bishop and placed it for him with a low bow.

'Thank you,' said the Bishop, taking the seat, 'I am somewhat tired, and the rest will be grateful. But be seated, too,' he added, for the 'holy man' was standing before him bowed in an attitude of respectful attention. Without a word Ivan drew up a stool and sat down.

'I was surprised,' the Bishop began, 'to find you have no church here, and no priest; the peasant who showed us the way did not even know what "Christianity" meant.'

The holy man looked at him with his patient eyes, but said nothing, so the Bishop went on:

'You're a Christian: are you not?'

'I have not heard that name before,' said the holy man.

The Bishop lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

'Why then do you attend to the poor and ailing in their need?' he argued; 'why do you help them?'



The holy man looked at him for a moment, and then replied quietly :

' I was helped when I was young and needed it.'

' But what religion have you?' asked the Bishop.

' Religion,' the old man repeated, wonderingly, ' what is religion?'

' We call ourselves Christians,' the Bishop began, ' because Jesus, the founder of our faith, was called Christ. Jesus was the Son of God, and came down from heaven with the Gospel of Good Tidings; He taught men that they were the children of God, and that God is love.'

The face of the old man lighted up and he leaned forward eagerly :

' Tell me about Him, please.'

The Bishop told him the story of Jesus, and when he came to the end the old man cried :

' What a beautiful story! I've never heard or imagined such a story.'

' I intend,' said the Bishop, ' as soon as I get home again, to send you a priest, and he will establish a church here where you can worship God, and he will teach you the whole story of the suffering and death of the divine Master.'

' That will be good of you,' cried the old man, warmly, ' we shall be very glad to welcome him.'

The Bishop was touched by the evident sincerity of his listener.

' Before I go,' he said, ' and I shall have to go soon, because it will take us some hours to get out to the ship again, I should like to tell you the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples.'

' I should like very much to hear it,' the old man said quietly.

' Let us kneel down then,' said the Bishop, ' as a sign of reverence, and repeat it after me, for we are all brethren

together in the love of the Master;' and saying this he knelt down, and the old man immediately knelt down beside him and clasped his hands as the Bishop clasped his and repeated the sentences as they dropped from the Bishop's lips.

'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.'

When the old man had repeated the words, the Bishop went on :

'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.'

The fervour with which the old man repeated the words 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven' was really touching.

The Bishop continued :

'Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.'

'Give . . . give—,' repeated the old man, having apparently forgotten the words.

'Give us this day our daily bread,' repeated the Bishop, 'and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.'

'Give and forgive,' said the old man at length . . . 'Give and forgive,' and the Bishop seeing that his memory was weak took up the prayer again :

'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

Again the old man repeated the words with an astonishing fervour, 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

And the Bishop concluded :

'For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.'

The old man's voice had an accent of loving and passionate sincerity as he said 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the beauty, for ever and ever. Amen.'

The Bishop rose to his feet and his host followed his example, and when he held out his hand the old man clasped it in both his, saying :

' How can I ever thank you for telling me that beautiful story of Christ; how can I ever thank you enough for teaching me His prayer?'

As one in an ecstasy he repeated the words : ' Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. . . '

Touched by his reverent, heartfelt sincerity, the Bishop treated him with great kindness; he put his hand on his shoulder and said :

' As soon as I get back I will send you a priest, who will teach you more, much more than I have had time to teach you; he will indeed tell you all you want to know of our religion—the love by which we live, the hope in which we die.' Before he could stop him the old man had bent his head and kissed the Bishop's hand; the tears stood in his eyes as he did him reverence.

He accompanied the Bishop to the water's edge, and, seeing the Bishop hesitate on the brink waiting for the steersman to carry him to the boat, the ' holy man ' stooped and took the Bishop in his arms and strode with him through the water and put him gently on the cushioned seat in the sternsheets as if he had been a little child, much to the surprise of the Bishop and of Lermontoff, who said as if to himself :

' That fellow's as strong as a young man.'

For a long time after the boat had left the shore the old man stood on the beach waving his hands to the Bishop and his companions; but when they were well out to sea, on the second tack, he turned and went up to his cottage and disappeared from their sight.

A little later the Bishop, turning to his priests, said :



'What an interesting experience! What a wonderful old man! Didn't you notice how fervently he said the Lord's Prayer?'

'Yes,' replied the younger priest indifferently, 'he was trying to show off, I thought.'

'No, no,' cried the Bishop. 'His sincerity was manifest and his goodness too. Did you notice that he said "give and forgive" instead of just repeating the words? And if you think of it, "give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" seems a little like a bargain. I'm not sure that the simple word "give and forgive" is not better, more in the spirit of Jesus?'

The younger priest shrugged his shoulders as if the question had no interest for him.

'Perhaps that's what the old man meant?' questioned the Bishop after a pause.

But as neither of the priests answered him, he went on, as if thinking aloud:

'At the end again he used the word "beauty" for "glory". I wonder was that unconscious? In any case an extraordinary man and good, I am sure, out of sheer kindness and sweetness of nature, as many men are good in Russia. No wonder our *moujiks* call it "Holy Russia"; no wonder, when you can find men like that.'

'They are as ignorant as pigs,' cried the other priests, 'not a soul in the village can either read or write: they are heathens, barbarians. They've never even heard of Christ and don't know what religion means.'

The Bishop looked at them and said nothing; seemingly he preferred his own thoughts.

It was black night when they came to the ship, and at once they all went to their cabins to sleep; for the day had been very tiring.

The Bishop had been asleep perhaps a couple of hours when he was awakened by the younger priest shaking him and saying :

'Come on deck quickly, quickly, Excellency, something extraordinary's happening, a light on the sea and no one can make out what it is!'

'A light,' exclaimed the Bishop, getting out of bed and beginning to draw on his clothes.

'Yes, a light on the water,' repeated the priest; 'but come quickly, please; the Captain sent me for you.'

When the Bishop reached the deck, the Captain was standing with his night-glass to his eyes, looking over the waste of water to leeward, where, indeed, a light could be seen flickering close to the surface of the sea; it appeared to be a hundred yards or so away.

'What is it?' cried the Bishop, astonished by the fact that all the sailors had crowded round and were staring at the light.

'What is it?' repeated the Captain gruffly, for he was greatly moved; 'it's a man with a grey beard; he has a lantern in his right hand, and he's walking on the water.'

'But no one can walk on the water,' said the Bishop gently. 'It would be a miracle,' he added, in a tone of remonstrance.

'Miracle or not,' retorted the Captain, taking the glass from his eyes, 'that's what I see, and the man'll be here soon, for he's coming towards us. Look, you,' and he handed the glass to one of the sailors as he spoke.

The light still went on swaying about as if indeed it were being carried in the hand of a man. The sailor had hardly put the night-glass to his eyes, when he cried out :

'That's what it is!—a man walking on the water... it's the "holy man" who carried your Excellency on board the boat this afternoon.'



'God help us' cried the priests, crossing themselves.

'He'll be here in a moment or two,' added the sailor, 'he's coming quickly,' and, indeed, almost at once the old man came to them from the water and stepped over the low bulwark on to the deck.

At this the priests went down on their knees, thinking it was some miracle, and the sailors, including the Captain, followed their example, leaving the Bishop standing awe-stricken and uncertain in their midst.

The 'holy man' came forward, and, stretching out his hands, said :

'I'm afraid I've disturbed you, Excellency : but soon after you left me, I found I had forgotten part of that beautiful prayer and I could not bear you to go away and think me careless of all you had taught me, and so I came to ask you to help my memory just once more.' . . .

'I remember the first part of the prayer and the last words as if I had been hearing it all my life and knew it in my soul, but the middle has escaped me.' . . .

'I remember "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," and then all I can remember is, "Give and forgive," and the end, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the beauty for ever and ever. Amen."'

'But I've forgotten some words in the middle : won't you tell me the middle again?'

'How did you come to us?' asked the Bishop in awed wonderment. 'How did you walk on the water?'

'Oh, that's easy,' replied the old man, 'any one can do that; whatever you love and trust in this world loves you in return. We love the water that makes everything pure and sweet for us, and is never tired of cleansing, and the water



loves us in return; any one can walk on it; but won't you teach me that beautiful prayer, the prayer Jesus taught His disciples?

The Bishop shook his head, and in a low voice, as if to himself, said :

' I don't think I can teach you anything about Jesus the Christ. You know a great deal already. I only wish—'

—*Frank Harris*



ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS

Advices, I believe, to young men, as to all men, are very seldom much valued. There is a great deal of advising, and very little faithful performing; and talk that does not end in any kind of action is better suppressed altogether. I would not, therefore, go much into advising; but there is one advice I must give you. In fact, it is the summary of all advices, and doubtless you have heard it a thousand times; but I must nevertheless let you hear it the thousand-and-first time, for it is most intensely true, whether you will believe it at present or not:—namely, That above all things the interest of your life depends on your being *diligent*, now while it is called to-day, in this place where you have come to get education! Diligent: that includes in it all virtues that a student can have; I mean it to include all those qualities of conduct that lead on to the acquirement of real instruction and improvement in such a place. If you will believe me, you who are young, yours is the golden season of life. As you have heard it called, so it verily is, the seed-time of life; in which, if you do not sow, or if you sow tares instead of wheat, you cannot expect to reap well afterwards, and you will arrive at little. And in the course of years, when you come to look back, if you have not done what you have heard from your advisers,—and among many counsellors there is wisdom,—you will bitterly repent when it is too late. The habits of study acquired at Universities are of the highest



importance in after-life. At the season when you are young in years, the whole mind is, as it were, fluid, and is capable of forming itself into any shape that the owner of the mind pleases to allow it, or constrain it, to form itself into. The mind is then in a plastic or fluid state; but it hardens gradually, to the consistency of rock or iron, and you cannot alter the habits of an old man: he, as he has begun, so he will proceed and go on to the last.

By diligence I mean, among other things, and very chiefly too,—honesty, in all your inquiries, and in all you are about. Pursue your studies in the way your conscience can name honest. More and more endeavour to do that. Keep, I should say for one thing, an accurate separation between what you have really come to know in your minds and what is still unknown. Leave all that latter on the hypothetical side of the barrier, as things afterwards to be acquired, if acquired at all; and be careful not to admit a thing as known when you do not yet know it. Count a thing known only when it is imprinted clearly on your mind, and has become transparent to you, so that you may survey it on all sides with intelligence. There is such a thing as a man endeavouring to persuade himself, and endeavouring to persuade others, that he knows things, when he does not know more than the outside skin of them; and yet he goes flourishing about with them. There is also a process called cramming, in some Universities,—that is, getting-up such points of things as the examiner is likely to put questions about. Avoid all that, as entirely unworthy of an honourable mind. Be modest, and humble, and assiduous in your



attention to what your teachers tell you, who are profoundly interested in trying to bring you forward in the right way, so far as they have been able to understand it. Try all things they set before you, in order, if possible, to understand them, and to follow and adopt them in proportion to their fitness for you. Gradually see what kind of work you individually can do; it is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in this universe. In short, morality as regards study is, as in all other things, the primary consideration, and overrules all others. A dishonest man cannot do anything real; he never will study with real fruit; and perhaps it would be greatly better if he were tied up from trying it. He does nothing but darken counsel by the words he utters. That is a very old doctrine, but a very true one; and you will find it confirmed by all the thinking men that have ever lived in this long series of generations of which we are the latest.

I daresay you know, very many of you, that it is now some seven hundred years since Universities were first set up in this world of ours. Abelard and other thinkers had arisen with doctrines in them which people wished to hear of, and students flocked towards them from all parts of the world. There was no getting the thing recorded in books, as you now may. You had to hear the man speaking to you vocally, or else you could not learn at all what it was that he wanted to say. And so they gathered together, these speaking ones,—the various people who had anything to teach;—and formed themselves gradually, under the patronage of kings and other potentates who were anxious about the

culture of their populations, and nobly studious of their best benefit; and became a body-corporate, with high privileges, high dignities, and really high aims, under the title of a University.

Possibly too you may have heard it said that the course of centuries has changed all this; and that 'the true University of our days is a Collection of Books.' And beyond doubt, all this is greatly altered by the invention of Printing, which took place about midway between us and the origin of Universities. Men have not now to go in person to where a Professor is actually speaking; because in most cases you can get his doctrine out of him through a book; and can then read it, and read it again and again, and study it. That is an immense change, that one fact of Printed Books. And I am not sure that I know of any University in which the whole of that fact has yet been completely taken in, and the studies moulded in complete conformity with it. Nevertheless, Universities have, and will continue to have, an indispensable value in society;—I think, a very high, and it might be, almost the highest value.

It remains, however, practically a most important truth, what I alluded to above, that the main use of Universities in the present age is that, after you have done with all your classes, the next thing is a collection of books, a great library of good books, which you proceed to study and to read. What the Universities can mainly do for you,—what I have found the University did for me, is, That it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences; so that I could go into the books which treated of these things, and gradually



penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me.

Well, Gentlemen, whatever you may think of these historical points, the clearest and most imperative duty lies on every one of you to be assiduous in your reading. Learn to be good readers,—which is perhaps a more difficult thing than you imagine. Learn to be discriminative in your reading; to read faithfully, and with your best attention, all kinds of things which you have a real interest in, a real not an imaginary, and which you find to be really fit for what you are engaged in. Of course, at the present time, in a great deal of the reading incumbent on you, you must be guided by the books recommended by your Professors for assistance towards the effect of their prelections. And then, when you leave the University, and go into studies of your own, you will find it very important that you have chosen a field, some province specially suited to you, in which you can study and work. The most unhappy of all men is the man who cannot tell what he is going to do, who has got no work cut-out for him in the world, and does not go into it. For work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind,—honest work, which you intend getting done.

If, in any vacant vague time, you are in a strait as to choice of reading,—a very good indication for you, perhaps the best you could get, is towards some book you have a great curiosity about. You are then in the readiest and best of all possible conditions to improve by that book. It is analogous to what doctors tell us about the physical health

and appetites of the patient. You must learn, however, to distinguish between false appetite and true. There is such a thing as a false appetite, which will lead a man into vagaries with regard to diet; will tempt him to eat spicy things, which he should not eat at all, nor would, but that the things are toothsome, and that he is under a momentary baseness of mind. A man ought to examine and find out what he really and truly has an appetite for, what suits his constitution and condition; and that, doctors tell him, is in general the very thing he ought to have. And so with books.

As applicable to all of you, I will say that it is highly expedient to go into History; to inquire into what has passed before you on this Earth, and in the Family of Man.

The history of the Romans and Greeks will first of all concern you; and you will find that the classical knowledge you have got will be extremely applicable to elucidate that. There you have two of the most remarkable races of men in the world set before you, calculated to open innumerable reflections and considerations; a mighty advantage, if you can achieve it;—to say nothing of what their two languages will yield you, which your Professors can better explain; model languages, which are universally admitted to be the most perfect forms of speech we have yet found to exist among men. And you will find, if you read well, a pair of extremely remarkable nations, shining in the records left by themselves, as a kind of beacon, or solitary mass of illumination, to light up some noble forms of human life for us, in the otherwise utter darkness of the past ages; and it will be well worth your while if you can get into the



understanding of what these people were, and what they did. You will find a great deal of hearsay, of empty rumour and tradition, which does not touch on the matter; but perhaps some of you will get to see the old Roman and the old Greek face to face; you will know in some measure how they contrived to exist, and to perform their feats in the world.

I believe, also, you will find one important thing not much noted, That there was a very great deal of deep religion in both nations. This is pointed out by the wiser kind of historians, and particularly by Ferguson, who is very well worth reading on Roman History,—and who, I believe, was an alumnus of our own University. His book is a very creditable work. He points out the profoundly religious nature of the Roman people, notwithstanding their ruggedly positive, defiant and fierce ways. They believed that Jupiter Optimus Maximus was lord of the universe, and that he had appointed the Romans to become the chief of nations, provided they followed his commands,—to brave all danger, all difficulty, and stand up with an invincible front, and be ready to do and die; and also to have the same sacred regard to truth of promise, to thorough veracity, thorough integrity, and all the virtues that accompany that noblest quality of man, valour,—to which latter the Romans gave the name of 'virtue' proper (*virtus*, manhood), as the crown and summary of all that is ennobling for a man. In the literary ages of Rome this religious feeling had very much decayed away; but it still retained its place among the lower classes of the Roman people. Of the deeply religious nature of the



Greeks, along with their beautiful and sunny effulgences of art, you have striking proof, if you look for it. In the tragedies of Sophocles there is a most deep-toned recognition of the eternal justice of Heaven, and the unfailing punishment of crime against the laws of God. I believe you will find in all histories of nations, that this has been at the origin and foundation of them all; and that no nation which did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awestricken and reverential belief that there was a great unknown, omnipotent, and all-wise and all-just Being, superintending all men in it, and all interests in it,—no nation ever came to very much, nor did any man either, who forgot that. If a man did forget that, he forgot the most important part of his mission in this world.

One remark more about your reading. I do not know whether it has been sufficiently brought home to you that there are two kinds of books. When a man is reading on any kind of subject, in most departments of books,—in all books, if you take it in a wide sense,—he will find that there is a division into good books and bad books. Everywhere a good kind of book and a bad kind of book. I am not to assume that you are unacquainted, or ill acquainted, with this plain fact; but I may remind you that it is becoming a very important consideration in our day. And we have to cast aside altogether the idea people have, that if they are reading any book, that if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all. I must entirely call that in question; I even venture to deny that. It would be much safer and better for many a reader, that



he had no concern with books at all. There is a number, a frightfully increasing number, of books that are decidedly, to the readers of them, not useful. But an ingenuous reader will learn, also, that a certain number of books were written by a supremely noble kind of people,—not a very great number of books, but still a number fit to occupy all your reading industry, do adhere more or less to that side of things. In short, as I have written it down somewhere else, I conceive that books are like men's souls; divided into sheep and goats. Some few are going up, and carrying us up, heavenward; calculated, I mean, to be of priceless advantage in teaching,—in forwarding the teaching of all generations. Others, a frightful multitude, are going down, down; doing ever the more and the wider and the wilder mischief. Keep a strict eye on that latter class of books, my young friends!—

And for the rest, in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges,—not that of getting higher and higher, in technical perfections, and all that sort of thing. There is a higher aim lying at the rear of all that, especially among those who are intended for literary or speaking pursuits, or the sacred profession. You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom;—namely, sound appreciation and just decision as to all the objects that come round you, and the habit of behaving with justice, candour, clear insight, and loyal adherence to fact. Great is wisdom; infinite is the value of wisdom. It cannot be exaggerated; it is the highest achievement of man:

'Blessed is he that getteth understanding.' And that I believe, on occasion, may be missed very easily; never more easily than now, I sometimes think. If that is a failure, all is failure!

Why tell me that a man is a fine speaker, if it is not the truth that he is speaking? Phocion, who mostly did not speak at all, was a great deal nearer hitting the mark than Demosthenes.

Such considerations and manifold more connected with them,—innumerable considerations, resulting from observation of the world at this epoch,—have led various people to doubt of the salutary effect of vocal education altogether. I do not mean to say it should be entirely excluded; but I look to something that will take hold of the matter much more closely, and not allow it to slip out of our fingers, and remain worse than it was. For, if a 'good speaker,' never so eloquent, does not see into the fact, and is not speaking the truth of that, but the untruth and the mistake of that,—is there a more horrid kind of object in creation? Of such speech I hear all manner of people say, "How excellent!" Well, really it is not the speech, but the thing spoken, that I am anxious about! I really care very little how the man said it, provided I understand him, and it be true. Excellent speaker? But what if he is telling me things that are contrary to the fact; what if he has formed a wrong judgment about the fact,—if he has in his mind no power to form a right judgment in regard to the matter? An excellent speaker of that kind is, as it were, saying, "Ho, every one that wants to be persuaded of the thing that is not true;



here is the man for you!" I recommend you to be very chary of that kind of excellent speech.

Man is born to expend every particle of strength that God Almighty has given him, in doing the work he finds he is fit for; to stand up to it to the last breath of life, and do his best. We are called upon to do that; and the reward we all get,—which we are perfectly sure of, if we have merited it,—is that we have got the work done, or at least that we have tried to do the work. For that is a great blessing in itself; and I should say, there is not very much more reward than that going in this world. If the man gets meat and clothes, what matters it whether he buy those necessaries with seven thousand a year, or with seven million, could that be, or with seventy pounds a year? He can get meat and clothes for that; and he will find intrinsically, if he is a wise man, wonderfully little real difference.

On the whole, avoid what is called ambition; that is not a fine principle to go upon,—and it has in it all degrees of *vulgarity*, if that is a consideration. 'Seekest thou great things, seek them not:' I warmly second that advice of the wisest of men. Don't be ambitious; 'cn't too much need success; be loyal and modest. Cut down the proud towering thoughts that get into you, or see that they be pure as well as high. There is a nobler ambition than the gaining of all California would be, or the getting of all the suffrages that are on the Planet just now.

Finally, Gentlemen, I have one advice to give you, which is practically of very great importance, though a very

humble one. In the midst of your zeal and ardour,—for such, I foresee, will rise high enough, in spite of all the counsels to moderate it that I can give you,—remember the care of health. I have no doubt you have among you young souls ardently bent to consider life cheap, for the purpose of getting forward in what they are aiming at of high; but you are to consider throughout, much more than is done at present, and what it would have been a very great thing for me if I had been able to consider, that health is a thing to be attended to continually; that you are to regard that as the very highest of all temporal things for you. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets and millions? The French financier said, “Why is there no sleep to be sold!” Sleep was not in the market at any quotation.

On the whole, I would bid you stand up to your work, whatever it may be, and not be afraid of it: not in sorrows or contradictions to yield, but to push on towards the goal. And don't suppose that people are hostile to you or have you at ill-will, in the world. In general, you will rarely find anybody designedly doing you ill. You may feel often as if the whole world were obstructing you, setting itself against you: but you will find that to mean only, that the world is travelling in a different way from you, and, rushing on in its own path, heedlessly treads on you. That is mostly all: to you no specific ill-will;—only each has an extremely good will to himself which he has a right to have, and is rushing on towards his object. If you find many people who are hard and indifferent to you, in a world which you consider



to be inhospitable and cruel, as often indeed happens to a tender-hearted, striving young creature, you will also find there are noble hearts who will look kindly on you; and their help will be precious to you beyond price. You will get good and evil as you go on, and have the success that has been appointed you.

—*Thomas Carlyle*

CIVILISATION

Whoever seriously occupies himself with literature, will soon perceive its vital connection with other agencies. Suppose a man to be ever so much convinced that literature is, as indisputably it is, a powerful agency for benefiting the world and for civilising it, such a man cannot but see that there are many obstacles preventing what is salutary in literature from gaining general admission, and from producing due effect. Undoubtedly, literature can of itself do something towards removing those obstacles, and towards making straight its own way. But it cannot do all. In other words, literature is a part of civilisation; it is not the whole. What then is civilisation, which some people seem to conceive of as if it meant railroads and the penny post, and little more, but which is really so complex and vast a matter that a great



spiritual power, like literature, is a part of it, and a part only? Civilisation is the humanisation of man in society. Man is civilised, when the whole body of society comes to live with a life worthy to be called *human*, and corresponding to man's true aspirations and powers.

The means by which man is brought towards this goal of his endeavour are various. It is of great importance to us to attain an adequate notion of them, and to keep it present before our minds. They may be conceived quite plainly, and enounced without any parade of hard and abstruse expression.

First and foremost of the necessary means towards man's civilisation we must name *expansion*. The need of expansion is as genuine an instinct in man as the need in plants for the light, or the need in man himself for going upright. All the conveniences of life by which man has enlarged and secured his existence—railroads and the penny post among the number—are due to the working in man of this force or instinct of expansion. But the manifestation of it which we English know best, and prize most, is the love of liberty.

The love of liberty is simply the instinct in man for expansion. Not only to find oneself tyrannised over and outraged is a defeat to this instinct; but in general, to feel oneself over-tutored, over-governed, *sate upon* (as the popular phrase is) by authority, is a defeat to it. Prince Bismarck says: 'After all, a benevolent rational absolutism is the best form of government.' Plenty of arguments may be adduced in support of such a thesis. The one fatal objection to it is that it is against nature, that it contradicts a vital



instinct in man—the instinct of expansion. And man is not to be civilised or humanised, call it which you will, by thwarting his vital instincts. In fact, the benevolent rational absolutism always breaks down. It is found that the ruler cannot in the long run be trusted; it is found that the ruled deteriorate. Why? Because the proceeding is against nature.

The other great manifestation of the instinct of expansion is the love of equality. Of the love of equality we English have little; but, undoubtedly, it is no more a false tendency than the love of liberty. Undoubtedly, immense inequality of conditions and property is a defeat to the instinct of expansion; it depresses and degrades the inferior masses. The common people is and must be, as Tocqueville said, more uncivilised in aristocratic countries than in any others. A thousand arguments may be discovered in favour of inequality, just as a thousand arguments may be discovered in favour of absolutism. And the one insuperable objection to inequality is the same as the one insuperable objection to absolutism: namely, that inequality, like absolutism, thwarts a vital instinct, and being thus against nature, is against our humanisation. On the one side, in fact, inequality harms by pampering; on the other, by vulgarising and depressing. A system founded on it is against nature, and in the long run breaks down.

I put first among the elements in human civilisation the instinct of expansion, because it is the basis which man's whole effort to civilise himself presupposes. General civilisation presupposes this instinct, which is inseparable from human nature; presupposes its being satisfied, not defeated.



The basis being given, we may rapidly enumerate the powers which, upon this basis, contribute to build up human civilisation. They are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners. Expansion, conduct, science, beauty, manners,—here are the conditions of civilisation, the claimants which man must satisfy before he can be humanised.

That the aim for all of us is to make civilisation pervasive and general; that the requisites for civilisation are substantially what have been here enumerated; that they all of them hang together, that they must all have their development, that the development of one does not compensate for the failure of others; that one nation suffers by failing in this requisite, and another by failing in that: such is the line of thought which the essays in the present volume* follow and represent. They represent it in their variety of subject, their so frequent insistence on defects in the present actual life of our nation, their unity of final aim. Undoubtedly, that aim is not given by the life which we now see around us. Undoubtedly, it is given by 'a sentiment of the ideal life.' But then the ideal life is, in sober and practical truth, 'none other than man's normal life, as we shall one day know it.'

—Matthew Arnold

* *Mixed Essays.* The extract is from the Preface to this book.



THE DYING SUN

A few stars are known which are hardly bigger than the earth, but the majority are so large that hundreds of thousands of earths could be packed inside each and leave room to spare; here and there we come upon a giant star large enough to contain millions of millions of earths. And the total number of stars in the universe is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the sea-shores of the world. Such is the littleness of our home in space when measured up against the total substance of the universe.

The vast multitude of stars are wandering about in space. A few form groups which journey in company, but the majority are solitary travellers. And they travel through a universe so spacious that it is an event of almost unimaginable rarity for a star to come anywhere near to another star. For the most part each voyages in splendid isolation, like a ship on an empty ocean. In a scale model in which the stars are ships, the average ship will be well over a million miles from its nearest neighbour, whence it is easy to understand why a ship seldom finds another within hailing distance.

We believe, nevertheless, that some two thousand million years ago this rare event took place, and that a second star, wandering blindly through space, happened to come within hailing distance of the sun. Just as the sun and moon raise tides on the earth, so this second star must have raised tides on the surface of the sun. But they would be



very different from the puny tides which the small mass of the moon raises in our oceans; a huge tidal wave must have travelled over the surface of the sun, ultimately forming a mountain of prodigious height, which would rise ever higher and higher as the cause of the disturbance came nearer and nearer. And, before the second star began to recede, its tidal pull had become so powerful that this mountain was torn to pieces and threw off small fragments of itself, much as the crest of a wave throws off spray. These small fragments have been circulating around their parent sun ever since. They are the planets, great and small, of which our earth is one.

The sun and the other stars we see in the sky are all intensely hot—far too hot for life to be able to obtain or retain a footing on them. So also no doubt were the ejected fragments of the sun when they were first thrown off. Gradually they cool, until now they have but little intrinsic heat left, their warmth being derived almost entirely from the radiation which the sun pours down upon them. In course of time, we know not how, when, or why, one of these cooling fragments gave birth to life. It started in simple organisms whose vital capacities consisted of little beyond reproduction and death. But from these humble beginnings emerged a stream of life which, advancing through ever greater and greater complexity, has culminated in beings whose lives are largely centred in their emotions and ambitions, their aesthetic appreciations, and the religions in which their highest hopes and noblest aspirations lie enshrined.



Although we cannot speak with any certainty, it seems most likely that humanity came into existence in some such way as this. Standing on our microscopic fragment of a grain of sand, we attempt to discover the nature and purpose of the universe which surrounds our home in space and time. Our first impression is something akin to terror. We find the universe terrifying because of its vast meaningless distances, terrifying because of its inconceivably long vistas of time which dwarf human history to the twinkling of an eye, terrifying because of our extreme loneliness, and because of the material insignificance of our home in space—a millionth part of a grain of sand out of all the sea-sand in the world. But above all else, we find the universe terrifying because it appears to be indifferent to life like our own; emotion, ambition and achievement, art and religion all seem equally foreign to its plan. Perhaps indeed we ought to say it appears to be actively hostile to life like our own. For the most part, empty space is so called that all life in it would be frozen; most of the matter in space is so hot as to make life on it impossible; space is traversed, and astronomical bodies continually bombarded, by radiation of a variety of kinds, much of which is probably inimical to, or even destructive of, life.

Into such a universe we have stumbled, if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident. The use of such a word need not imply any surprise that our earth exists, for accidents will happen, and if the universe goes on for long enough, every conceivable accident is likely to happen in time. It was,



I think, Huxley who said that six monkeys, set to strum unintelligently on typewriters for millions of millions of years, would be bound in time to write all the books in the British Museum. If we examined the last page which a particular monkey had typed, and found that it had chanced, in its blind strumming, to type a Shakespeare sonnet, we should rightly regard the occurrence as a remarkable accident, but if we looked through all the millions of pages the monkeys had turned off in untold millions of years, we might be sure of finding a Shakespeare sonnet somewhere amongst them, the product of the blind play of chance. In the same way, millions of millions of stars wandering blindly through space for millions of millions of years are bound to meet with every kind of accident; a limited number are bound to meet with that special kind of accident which calls planetary systems into being. Yet calculation shews that the number of these can at most be very small in comparison with the total number of stars in the sky; planetary systems must be exceedingly rare objects in space.

This rarity of planetary systems is important, because, so far as we can see, life of the kind we know on earth could only originate on planets like the earth. It needs suitable physical conditions for its appearance, the most important of which is a temperature at which substances can exist in the liquid state.

The stars themselves are disqualified by being far too hot. We may think of them as a vast collection of fires scattered throughout space, providing warmth in a climate which is at most some four degrees above absolute zero—



about 484 degrees of frost on our Fahrenheit scale—and is even lower in the vast stretches of space which lie out beyond the Milky Way. Away from the fires there is this unimaginable cold of hundreds of degrees of frost; close up to them there is a temperature of thousands of degrees, at which all solids melt, all liquids boil.

Life can only exist inside a narrow temperate zone which surrounds each of these fires at a very definite distance. Outside these zones life would be frozen; inside, it would be shrivelled up. At a rough computation, these zones within which life is possible, all added together, constitute less than a thousand million millionth part of the whole of space. And even inside them, life must be of very rare occurrence, for it is so unusual an accident for suns to throw off planets as our own sun has done, that probably only about one star in 100,000 has a planet revolving round it in the small zone in which life is possible.

Just for this reason it seems incredible that the universe can have been designed primarily to produce life like our own; had it been so, surely we might have expected to find a better proportion between the magnitude of the mechanism and the amount of the product. At first glance at least, life seems to be an utterly unimportant by-product; we living things are somehow off the main line.

We do not know whether suitable physical conditions are sufficient in themselves to produce life. One school of thought holds that as the earth gradually cooled, it was natural, and indeed almost inevitable, that life should come. Another holds that after one accident had brought the



earth into being, a second was necessary to produce life. The material constituents of a living body are perfectly ordinary chemical atoms—carbon, such as we find in soot or lampblack; hydrogen and oxygen, such as we find in water; nitrogen, such as forms the greater part of the atmosphere, and so on. Every kind of atom necessary for life must have existed on the new-born earth. At intervals, a group of atoms might happen to arrange themselves in the way in which they are arranged in the living cell. Indeed, given sufficient time, they would be certain to do so, just as certain as the six monkeys would be certain, given sufficient time, to type off a Shakespeare sonnet. But would they then be a living cell? In other words, is a living cell merely a group of ordinary atoms arranged in some non-ordinary way, or is it something more? Is it merely atoms, or is it atoms plus life? Or, to put it in another way, could a sufficiently skilful chemist create life out of the necessary atoms, as a boy can create a machine out of "Meccano," *and then make it go*? We do not know the answer. When it comes it will give us some indication whether other worlds in space are inhabited like ours, and so must have the greatest influence on our interpretation of the meaning of life—it may well produce a greater revolution of thought than Galileo's astronomy or Darwin's biology.

We do, however, know that while living matter consists of quite ordinary atoms, it consists in the main of atoms which have a special capacity for coagulating into extraordinary large bunches or "molecules".



Most atoms do not possess this property. The atoms of hydrogen and oxygen, for instance, may combine to form molecules of hydrogen (H_2 or H_3), of oxygen or ozone (O_2 or O_3), of water (H_2O), or of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), but none of these compounds contains more than four atoms. The addition of nitrogen does not greatly change the situation; the compounds of hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen all contain comparatively few atoms. But the further addition of carbon completely transforms the picture; the atoms of hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon combine to form molecules containing hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of atoms. It is of such molecules that living bodies are mainly formed. Until a century ago it was commonly supposed that some "vital force" was necessary to produce these and the other substances which entered into the composition of the living body. Then Wöhler produced urea, $CO(NH_2)_2$, which is a typical animal product, in his laboratory, by the ordinary processes of chemical synthesis, and other constituents of the living body followed in due course. To-day one phenomenon after another which was at one time attributed to "vital force" is being traced to the action of the ordinary processes of physics and chemistry. Although the problem is still far from solution, it is becoming increasingly likely that what specially distinguishes the matter of living bodies is the presence not of a "vital force," but of the quite commonplace element carbon, always in conjunction with other atoms with which it forms exceptionally large molecules.



If this is so, life exists in the universe only because the carbon atom possesses certain exceptional properties. Perhaps carbon is rather noteworthy chemically as forming a sort of transition between the metals and the non-metals, but so far nothing in the physical constitution of the carbon atom is known to account for its very special capacity for binding other atoms together. The carbon atom consists of six electrons revolving around the appropriate central nucleus, like six planets revolving around a central sun; it appears to differ from its two nearest neighbours in the table of chemical elements, the atoms of boron and nitrogen, only in having one electron more than the former and one electron fewer than the latter. Yet this slight difference must account in the last resort for all the difference between life and absence of life. No doubt the reason why the six-electron atom possesses these remarkable properties resides somewhere in the ultimate laws of nature, but mathematical physics has not yet fathomed it.

So much for the surprising manner in which, so far as science can at present inform us, we came into being. And our bewilderment is only increased when we attempt to pass from our origins to an understanding of the purpose of our existence, or to foresee the destiny which fate has in store for our race.

Life of the kind we know can only exist under suitable conditions of light and heat; we only exist ourselves because the earth receives exactly the right amount of radiation from the sun; upset the balance in either direction, of excess or defect, and life must disappear from the earth.



And the essence of the situation is that the balance is very easily upset.

Primitive man, living in the temperate zone of the earth, must have watched the ice-age descending on his home with something like terror; each year the glaciers came farther down into the valleys; each winter the sun seemed less able to provide the warmth needed for life. To him, as to us, the universe must have seemed hostile to life.

We of these later days, living in the narrow temperate zone surrounding our sun and peering into the far future, see an ice-age of a different kind threatening us. Just as Tantalus, standing in a lake so deep that he only just escaped drowning, was yet destined to die of thirst, so it is the tragedy of our race that it is probably destined to die of cold, while the greater part of the substance of the universe still remains too hot for life to obtain a footing. The sun, having no extraneous supply of heat, must necessarily emit ever less and less of its life-giving radiation, and, as it does so, the temperate zone of space, within which alone life can exist, must close in around it. To remain a possible abode of life, our earth would need to move in ever nearer and nearer to the dying sun. Yet, science tells us that, so far from its moving inwards, inexorable dynamical laws are even now driving it ever farther away from the sun into the outer cold and darkness. And, so far as we can see, they must continue to do so until life is frozen on the earth, unless indeed some celestial collision or cataclysm intervenes to destroy life even earlier by a more speedy death. This prospective fate is not peculiar



to our earth; other suns must die like our own, and any life there may be on other planets must meet the same inglorious end.

Physics tells the same story as astronomy. For, independently of all astronomical considerations, the general physical principle known as the second law of thermodynamics predicts that there can be but one end to the universe—a "heat-death" in which the total energy of the universe is uniformly distributed, and all the substance of the universe is at the same temperature. This temperature will be so low as to make life impossible. It matters little by what particular road this final state is reached; all roads lead to Rome, and the end of the journey cannot be other than universal death.

Is this, then, all that life amounts to—to stumble, almost by mistake, into a universe which was clearly not designed for life, and which, to all appearances, is either totally indifferent or definitely hostile to it, to stay clinging on to a fragment of a grain of sand until we are frozen off, to strut our tiny hour on our tiny stage with the knowledge that our aspirations are all doomed to final frustration, and that our achievements must perish with our race, leaving the universe as though we had never been?

—*Sir James Jeans*



THE GREAT RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

The earliest civilizations of which I shall write are those of India and China which existed some 2500 years ago. But I shall not describe them at any length, and this for two reasons. First, we know very little about them, so that in any event there is not much to say; secondly, they are chiefly famous for their religions. The Indians and the Chinese deserve a mention, not so much because they thought freely, or made beautiful things (although the Chinese in particular did both), as because they had new ideas about what I have called the business of being good, and tried to put them into practice.

Early Religious Ideas.—In order to show the religious advance made by these civilizations, I must first say something about the religious ideas which prevailed before they began. Early religious ideas might be described as a mixture of fear and cupboard love. Primitive man found himself at the mercy of all kinds of material forces which he did not understand and could not control; thunder and lightning and earthquakes and floods. He could not imagine these things happening without something to make them happen, and, according to his ideas, something meant somebody. There must be, he thought, some kind of *person* behind these thunderstorms and earthquakes, and in this notion of a somebody who caused dreadful things to happen we have the beginning of the idea of god. But primitive man did not think of one god who was responsible for everything that took place, but of a number of gods, each of them ruling over

a particular department of the world. For instance in Egypt, where there was already some kind of civilization, one of the earliest known, some four thousand years ago, there was a great multiplicity of these gods, a god for the moon, a god for the sun, a god of darkness, a god even of learning. Many of these gods were animals; there was a cow goddess (Isis), a frog goddess (Hekt), and so on. The gods loved and hated and struggled and had favourites just like human beings, and practically everything that happened in the world was thought to be due to them. And people had to be very careful to keep them in a good temper, for the gods were liable to get angry and sulk, with terrible results for human beings. All through the early history of man runs the idea that it is only by praying to the gods and flattering them that man can survive the many perils of his life. For example, the Egyptians believed that the morning would only come if Ré, the sun-god, was fetched up from the underworld every twenty-four hours by the prayers of the high-priest, who had to humble himself and beg Ré to appear.

The Power of Priests.—Beliefs of this sort gave very great power to the priests. The priests were the "go-betweens" between men and gods; they alone knew the will of the gods, and they told men what it was. Thus the priests managed to get the people to do whatever they wanted them to do by simply saying that it was the will of the gods, and must therefore be done, or some terrible disaster would befall. By this means the priests became very powerful.

This power of the priests, which was founded on fear of the gods, led to many cruel practices, among them human

(1) sacrifice. For the priests were apt to say that unless living victims were sacrificed to please the gods, the gods would show their displeasure by causing the tribe to be defeated in battle, by spoiling the crops, or in some other unpleasant way. To take the case of Egypt again, the prosperity of the country depends very largely on the river Nile. The Egyptian soil is very dry and would bear no crops unless it were watered by the Nile. Every year the Nile overflows its banks and floods the country for miles all round, and as a result of this flooding the land is fertilized and bears crops. Now the river Nile, of course, had its special god, or rather goddess, and the priests said that unless the proper sacrifices and burnt offerings were made to the goddess of the Nile, the river would refuse to overflow its banks and people would starve. The sacrifices were usually animals, oxen and so forth, but sometimes they were human beings. Most primitive people have had beliefs of this sort. The Aztecs, who lived in Mexico, believed that men were created to be the food of the sun and were required to fight and slay one another, so that it should not want for nourishment. Hence they thought that unless they offered the sun human flesh from time to time, its light would grow dim.

Cupboard Love for the Gods.—Not only were the rites and practices of early peoples cruel, not only did they give great power to the priests, but they meant that people had a very low idea of religion. Early religions, as I said above, are a mixture of fear and cupboard love. You are afraid of the evil things the gods will do to you unless you keep them in a good temper, and you have hopes of the good things



they will do for you if you like them or pretend to like them well enough. In other words, you worship them for what you think you can get out of them. And so you flatter them and pray to them and tell them how powerful and how good they are, and bribe them with sacrifices and by making presents to the priests for the temple. The worse-tempered the gods were, the more presents you had to make; and it is not to be wondered at that the priests, who benefited by the presents, made out that the gods were very bad-tempered indeed.

One God instead of Many.—The chief merit of the civilizations about which I am first going to write is that they rose above these very primitive ideas about the gods. In the Old Testament of the Bible, which was written by the Jews, and the Indian sacred writings called the *Upanishads*, we find it being taught that there is only one God. This substitution of one God for many was undoubtedly a great advance; for one thing it put an end, although only by degrees, to the practice of human sacrifice. But it must be admitted that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is not a very agreeable person. He is a terribly jealous God who will not admit any rivals, and he is always getting cross, so that, although the belief in him may have caused the Jews to act righteously, they did so chiefly in order to avoid incurring his wrath. Fear, in fact, was still the mainspring of religion.

But in the sixth century before Christ there arose in India and China three great teachers who tried to make men understand that it was important to do what was right for its own sake, quite apart from whether there was a God or not.

Buddha.—Of these the most important was Gautama Buddha (568-488 B.C.). Buddha was a rich young Indian, born of a noble family. At the age of nineteen he married a beautiful cousin, and until he was twenty-nine lived the ordinary life of an Indian nobleman of his times, the kind of life which I have called a "treacle toffee" life. Then he suddenly became discontented; this life that he had been living was not, he felt, the real life, but a sort of holiday. He wanted to find out the meaning and purpose of being alive, and with this object he joined for a time the ascetics.

There have been ascetics at all times and in all countries, but they have always been particularly numerous in India. They are people who believe that power and holiness may be obtained by making one's body uncomfortable, as for example by not eating or sleeping, and by beating oneself. But after a time Buddha turned from these ideas. Having come to see that the way to discover truth is not to have a weak or diseased body, he horrified his companions by demanding food. Accordingly they cast him out as a failure, and for a time he wandered quite alone. We know nothing of his wanderings, but presently we find him sitting under an enormous fig tree, called the Bo tree. Here he had a kind of vision. And his vision resulted in the first great teaching about good and right which was given to mankind.

Buddha taught that all man's unhappiness comes from wanting the wrong sort of things, the pleasures that money can buy, power over other men, and, most important of all, to go on living for ever after one is dead. The desire for these



things makes people selfish, he said, so that they come to think only of themselves, to want things only for themselves, and not to mind overmuch what happens to other people. And since they do not get all their wishes, they are restless and discontented. The only way to avoid this restlessness is to get rid of the desires that cause it. This is very difficult, but when a man achieves it, he reaches a state of mind or soul which is called *Nirvana*, which is a state of perfect quiet and calm. Some Buddhists have supposed that people live a number of different lives, and that what happens to them in each life depends upon the way in which they have behaved in their former lives. For instance, if you have been very wicked in a previous life, you get born a slave or even one of the lower animals as a sort of punishment. And you go on living life after life until you reach the stage of having got rid of your desires, and entering *Nirvana*. This does not, however, seem to have been the teaching of Buddha himself.

Lao-Tse and Confucius.—About the same time as Buddha, two great religious teachers arose in China. Lao-Tse's teaching (about 600-510 B.C.) was very like that of Buddha. Confucius (550-478 B.C.) paid more attention to men's relations to their fellow-men. His view was that a man could not achieve goodness all by himself, since it was natural for him to live in society together with other men. And, since the society which he knew, the China of his day, was as full of strife and suffering as most societies have been, he taught that the way for a man to become good was by helping to make society better. "It



is impossible," he said, "to withdraw from the world, and associate with birds and beasts that have nothing in common with me. With whom, then, should I associate but with suffering men? The disorder that prevails is what requires my efforts." And so he laid down a code of rules for conduct in daily life. These rules are very detailed; they lay down what one should eat, what wear, what visits one should pay, how conduct oneself in public, and so on, and they have governed the behaviour of the Chinese ever since.

The teachings of Buddha, Lao-Tse and Confucius are known by the Chinese as the Three Teachings. The Chinese and the Indians are very numerous, and although very few Indians remain Buddhists to-day, these three teachings, which are in many important respects the same teaching, have determined what most living human beings have thought and believed with regard to matters of good and evil and right and wrong. And not only most human beings but most civilized human beings. For, although the history of China has been very stormy and the state of China to-day is unsettled and confused, the Chinese have been civilized for a longer period and more continuously than any other people. In spite of the troubled times through which China has passed, and the many different peoples who have invaded it, Chinese civilization has never died out, and it is quite possible that, as it came before any of the other civilizations, so it may last longer than any.

Importance of Asoka.—That Buddhism became so important in the world is largely due to a great king who ruled in India in the third century B.C. He is the only king I



shall mention in this book, and his name is Asoka (264-227 B.C.). Like most famous kings in history, Asoka was a conqueror. His father, Chandragupta, had transformed India from a number of little warring states into a more or less unified country, and Asoka pushed his father's conquests right down to the southern end of India. Unlike the other great conquerors in history, however, he seems to have realized the suffering that war involved. He was a devout Buddhist and wanted to make other people Buddhists too. But it could not, he thought, be right to spread what you believed by violent means; and so he gave up war, while still victorious, and decided to devote himself to spreading Buddhism not by fighting but by preaching. He kept his empire at peace and ruled wisely. In particular, he did much to make India more prosperous by digging wells, planting trees, founding hospitals, and educating his people. He even tried to educate women, which was an unheard-of thing in those days. And he sent out missionaries all over Asia and into Europe to spread the teachings of Buddha.

While doing these things he met with the opposition of the priests. For Buddhism, unlike most other religions, does not require priests and clergymen to teach men how to be good, to pray to the gods on their behalf, and to persuade the gods to favour them. It teaches that men can become good by themselves without the aid of priests, and ought to try to do so apart altogether from the question of pleasing the gods.

What the Great Religions Teach.—But although these new religions were addressed to individual men and women, they all of them tried to show that happiness lay in somehow



forgetting that you were an individual man or woman, and in losing yourself in something greater than yourself. In this they were saying precisely what Jesus Christ was to say nearly 600 years later. Most people in the western world think Jesus was the greatest of the religious teachers, and regard the religion of Christianity which he founded as the most important of all the religions. Christianity to-day is the chief religion of western Europe and America. It is, however, important to remember that what Europeans and Americans think about Christ is not what the majority of men have thought about him or think even now. But, although men differ about who Christ was, most people believe that he was a very great teacher indeed, and that what he taught about the way in which men ought to live is both noble and true.

We cannot doubt that if men lived the kind of life which these four great religious teachers urged them to live, the world would be much better and happier, and at the same time a more civilized place than it is or ever has been. Unfortunately their teachings, especially that of Jesus (who said that we should be kind even to our enemies), have usually been found to be too difficult for people to follow, though that is no reason why they shouldn't *try* to follow them.

All the great religious teachers of mankind have insisted on this: that men ought not to live for themselves alone. We ought not, they have said, to spend all our time and energy in getting just what we want for ourselves, power and money and importance in the world: we ought to serve something greater than ourselves, whether a god or a cause



or our fellow-men. It is by serving this something greater that men will forget themselves and so achieve happiness. This or something like it is what the great religions have taught, and it is one of the most important of the things that civilization means. It is also the hardest to learn and practise; in fact most people have found it much too hard.

—C. E. M. Joad

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